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# The SMART SET

Edited by  
George Jean Nathan  
and  
H.L. Mencken.

v. 72  
no. 4





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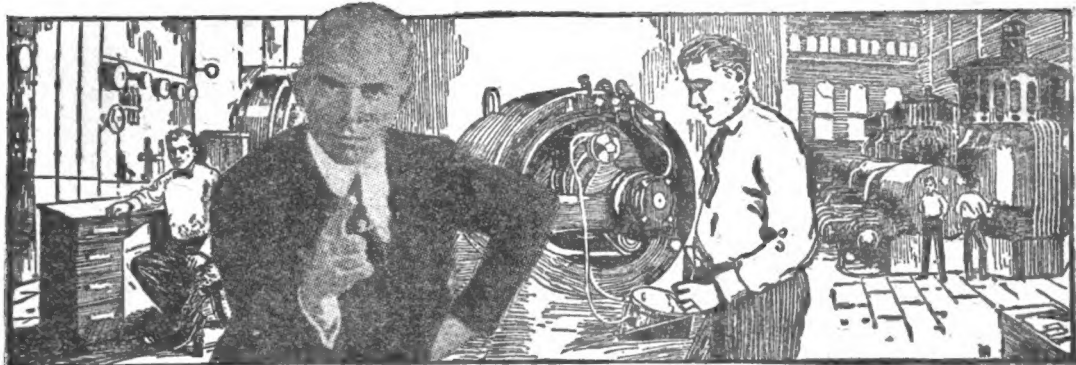


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# Pills Never Made Muscles

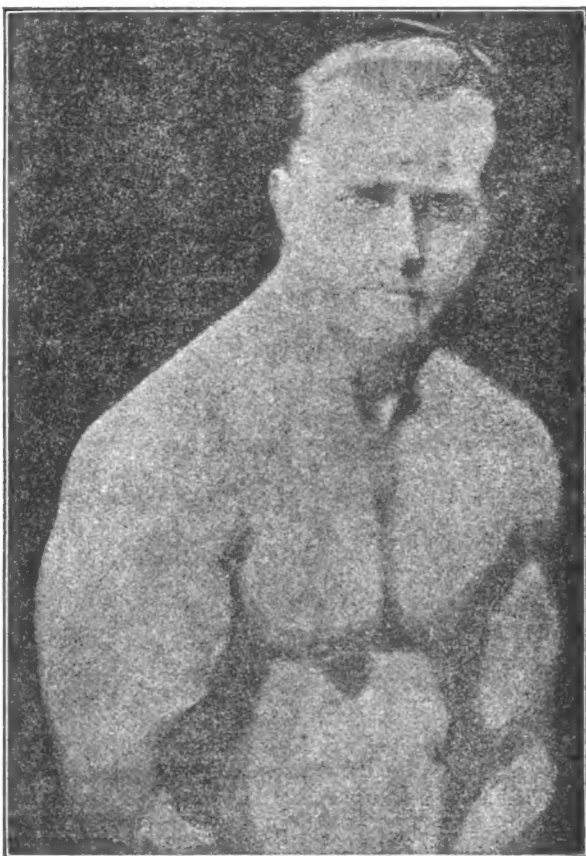
## Wishing Never Brought Strength

**N**O one can paste muscles onto your arms and shoulders. If you wish a strong, healthy body, you must work for it. And if you don't have one, you are doomed to a life of misery.

Modern science has taught us that we must keep our bodies physically fit or our mental powers will soon exhaust themselves. That is why the successful business man resorts to golf and other active pastimes.

## Examine Yourself

Do you have the strong, robust body which keeps you *fit* at all times to tackle the daily tasks confronting you—always looking for bigger things to do? Do you jump out of bed in the morning full of pep; with a keen appetite and a longing to enter the day's activities? Do you finish your daily tasks still thrilling with pep and vitality? Or do you arise only half awake and go through a languid day?



EARLE E. LIEDERMAN as he is today

## PEP UP!

Don't let it get you, fellows. Come on out of that shell and make a real *he* man of yourself. Build out those skinny arms and that flat chest. Let me put some real pep in your old backbone and put an armor plate of muscle on you that will make you actually thrill with ambition. I can do it. I guarantee to do it. I will put one full inch on your arm in just 30 days and from then on, just watch 'em grow. This is no idle boast. It's the real works. A genuine guarantee. Come on now. Get on the job and make me prove it.

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# Finding "The Fountain of Youth"

*Along-Sought Secret, Vital to Happiness, Has Been Discovered.*

*By H. M. Stunz*

*Alas! that spring should vanish with the rose!  
That youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close!*  
—OMAR KHAYYAM.



A SECRET vital to human happiness has been discovered. An ancient problem which, sooner or later, affects the welfare of virtually every man and woman, has been solved. As this problem undoubtedly will come to you eventually, I urge you to read this article carefully. It may give you information of a value beyond all price.

This newly revealed secret is not a new "philosophy" of financial success. It has to do with something of far greater moment to the individual—success and happiness in love and marriage—and there is nothing theoretical, imaginative or fantastic about it, because it comes from the coldly exact realms of science and its value has been proved. It "works." And because it does work—surely, speedily and most delightfully—it is one of the most important discoveries made in many years. Thousands already bless it for having rescued them from lives of disappointment and misery.

The peculiar value of this discovery is that it removes physical handicaps which, in the past, have been considered inevitable and irremediable. I refer to the loss of youthful animation and a waning of the vital forces. These difficulties have caused untold unhappiness—failures, shattered romances, mysterious divorces. True happiness does not depend on wealth, position or fame. Primarily, it is a matter of health. Not the inefficient "half-alive" condition which ordinarily passes as "health," but the abundant, magnetic vitality of superb manhood and womanhood.

Unfortunately, this kind of health is rare. Our civilization rapidly depletes the organism and, in a physical sense, old age comes on when life should be at its prime. But this is not a tragedy of our era alone. Ages ago a Persian poet voiced

humanity's immemorial complaint that "spring should vanish with the rose" and the song of youth too soon come to an end. And for centuries before Omar Khayyam wrote his immortal verses, science had searched—and in the centuries that have passed since then has continued to search—without halt, for the fabled "fountain of youth," an infallible method of renewing energy lost or depleted by disease, overwork, worry, excesses or advancing age.

Now the long search has been rewarded. A "fountain of youth" has been found! Science announces unconditionally that youthful vigor can be restored quickly and safely. Lives clouded by weakness can be illuminated by the sunlight of health and joy. Old age, in a sense, can be kept at bay and youth made more glorious than ever. And the discovery which makes these amazing results possible is something any man or woman, young or old, can easily use in the privacy of the home.

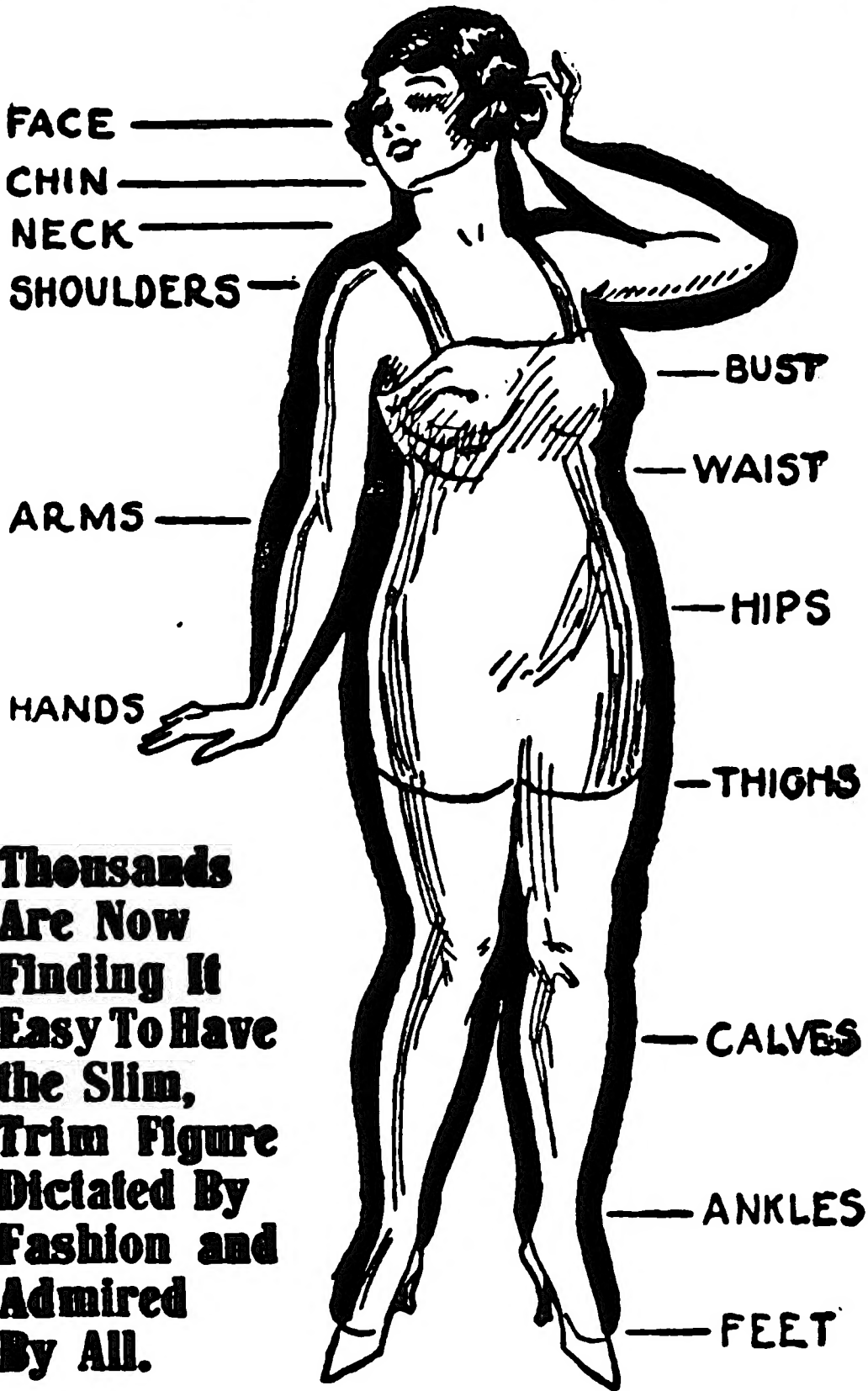
The discovery had its origin in famous European laboratories. Brought to America, it was developed into a product that has given most remarkable results in thousands of cases, many of which had defied all other treatments. In scientific circles the discovery has been known and used for several years and has caused unbounded amazement by its quick, harmless, gratifying action. Now, in convenient tablet form, under the name of Korex compound, it is available to the general public.

Anyone who finds the youthful stamina ebbing, life losing its charm and color or the feebleness of old age coming on too soon, can obtain a double-strength treatment of this compound under a positive guarantee that it costs nothing if it fails and only \$2 if it produces prompt and gratifying results. In average cases, the compound often brings about amazing benefits in from twenty-four to forty-eight hours.

Simply write in confidence to the Melton Laboratories, 2148 Melton Bldg., Kansas City, Mo., and this wonder restorative will be mailed to you in a plain wrapper. You may enclose \$2 or, if you prefer, just send your name without money and pay the postman \$2 and postage when the parcel is delivered. In either case, if you report within ten days that the Korex compound has not given satisfactory results, your money will be refunded upon request. The Melton Laboratories are nationally known and thoroughly reliable. Moreover, their offer is fully guaranteed, so no one need hesitate to accept it. If you need this remarkable scientific rejuvenator, write for it today.



# Would You Like To Lose a Pound a Day? Then Try This Delightfully Simple Way —



**Thousands  
Are Now  
Finding It  
Easy To Have  
the Slim,  
Trim Figure  
Dictated By  
Fashion and  
Admired  
By All.**

**H**RE you fat? You shouldn't be. Without rigorous dieting or exercise—by a simple natural process—you should quickly and easily be able to have the slender fashionable figure that is so attractive.

Scientists have discovered that excess fat is often caused by the subnormal action of a small gland. Once this gland is healthy and functioning properly, your weight should reduce naturally and without effort on your part, to the normal amount for your height.

And science has discovered a simple extract which tends to regulate the gland that controls fat. Without lifting a hand in unnecessary and violent exercise, you should find it a delightfully simple matter to have the ideal, slender figure admired by everyone.

The wonderful thing about the scientific formula known as Rid-O-Fat is that in losing your superfluous fat you should gain added vigor, health and energy of mind and body.

## Feel Young—Look Young

There is nothing which adds to a person's age so much as fat. A few extra pounds makes any man or woman look from five to ten years older. Not only that, the excess weight and increased heart action saps vitality and energy.

Once the gland which controls your fat is functioning properly your food should be turned into firm, solid flesh and muscle. As your weight comes down to normal you should experience a delightful and amazing improvement in your appearance. You should not only feel and look younger—you should actually be younger. You should also be in better health—a real health of energy—not the fictitious and deceiving health of fat that insurance companies say shortens the life ten years.

Complexion, health and figure are improved at the same time. The result is new vitality, magnetism and personal charm that makes for success. Tasks once hard become easy and life worth while.

**Science Discloses Method of Quickly Reducing  
Excess Weight—Many Losing a Pound a Day  
Without Starvation Dieting or Exercise  
— Greatly Improves Appearance.  
Generous Sample Sent Free.**

**Quick Results—  
No Exercise—  
No Starvation Dieting.**

Rid-O-Fat, the scientific compound, comes in convenient tablet form, and is practically tasteless. You simply take one at each meal and bedtime. Results often surprising in their rapidity.

Within a few days you should be conscious of a new feeling of energy and lightness, taking the place of that tired, worn-out feeling.

Quickly as the fat gland resumes normal functioning you should lose weight in a healthy, normal manner. Many fat, ungainly figures are in this scientific manner helped to regain their normal and idealistic proportions, giving that fashionable slenderness and athletic poise.

And all this time you live as you please. Nature is doing the work. No more irksome exercise—no more denying yourself of all the things you like. Take just one small, pleasant, Rid-O-Fat tablet after each meal. Could anything be more simple?

## Rid-O-Fat Used By 100,000 People

Since the announcement of the wonderful Rid-O-Fat formula it has been used by more than 100,000 people. Twenty to thirty thousand more people are writing for it every month. The following letters show what users think of the scientific Rid-O-Fat system of fat reduction:

**Lost Forty-One Pounds In Thirty Days**  
"When I wrote for your Rid-O-Fat sample I weighed 245 pounds. Today, which is 30 days later, I weighed only 204 pounds. A reduction of 41 pounds in a month. I am delighted. Please send me another 30-day treatment, as I want to reduce to 145 pounds, which is the correct weight for my height. I am sure that I will realize my ambition with Rid-O-Fat and I feel better than I have in years."

**Lost Twenty Pounds In Three Weeks**  
"According to weight tables I weighed exactly 20 pounds too much. Rid-O-Fat reduced me to normal in just a little more than three weeks. I feel better, don't get tired, and my friends say I look like a new person."

## Generous Sample FREE

I want every fat person to have a chance to try Rid-O-Fat in their own homes at my expense. I don't want them to take my word or that of the thousands who have used it. I want them to see for themselves that the results are more pleasing than anything I can say. To introduce Rid-O-Fat in a million more homes I will send a free sample to anyone who will write for it. In fact it is really more than a sample, as it is sufficient to reduce the average person several pounds. I will also send with the sample an interesting booklet that explains the scientific reason for fat, and why Rid-O-Fat meets with the highest approval.

**Costs Nothing!** Don't send a penny—I will send the sample and the booklet under plain wrapper and fully postpaid. This does not obligate you in any way and is never to cost you a cent. It is simply a limited offer I am making to more generally introduce Rid-O-Fat.

This free offer is good for only a short time, so send me your name and address on the coupon below or a post card, and I will see that the generous sample and booklet are mailed immediately under plain wrapper postpaid. Do not try to get Rid-O-Fat at drug stores as it is distributed only direct from my laboratory to you—remember this is a short time offer and send your name at once. H. C. HAIST, Whinton Laboratories, 1504 Coca Cola Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

**H. C. HAIST, Whinton Laboratories  
1504 Coca Cola Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.**

Without obligation in any way and with the understanding it is not to cost me a cent at any time, please send me your generous free sample of Rid-O-Fat and free booklet under plain wrapper.

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Address .....





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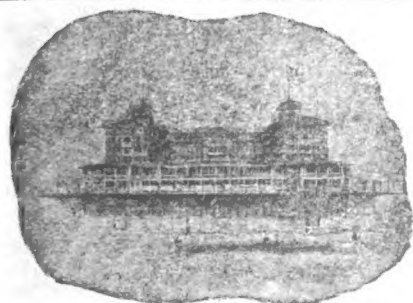
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This amazing offer is for a short time only. The demand for the Book of Etiquette at this great reduction will probably be so large that the company must reserve the right to withdraw this offer at any time. You are urged to send for your set at once.

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The Book of Etiquette is admittedly one of the most complete and authoritative works of its kind ever published. It covers every phase of wedding etiquette, street etiquette, dinner etiquette, dance etiquette—it contains paragraphs for the self-conscious and timid; for the bachelor; for the business woman; for the country hostess. Nothing is forgotten, nothing omitted. The Book of Etiquette will tell you everything you want to know. It will protect you from sudden embarrassments, give you a wonderful new ease and poise of manner.

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Here's your chance—take it! Let us send you the famous two-volume Book of Etiquette at the special offer price.

No money is necessary. Just clip and mail the coupon below to us at once. We will send you the complete, two-volume set of the Book of Etiquette, and when it arrives you have the privilege of giving the postman only \$1.98 (plus a few cents postage) for the regular \$3.50 set!

Clip and mail this coupon NOW while you are thinking about it and the Book of Etiquette will be sent to you in plain carton with no identifying marks. Nelson Doubleday, Inc., Dept. 19912, Garden City, New York.

### Use This Special Coupon

Nelson Doubleday, Inc., Dept. 19912, Garden City, N. Y.

I accept your special offer. You may send me the complete, two-volume set of the Book of Etiquette in a plain carton. When it arrives I will give the postman only \$1.98 (plus few cents postage). Instead of \$3.50, the regular price. I retain the privilege of returning the books at any time within 5 days of their receipt, and my money will be refunded at once if I demand it.

Name .....

Address .....

I check this square if you want these books with the beautiful full-leather binding at \$2.98 with same return privilege.  
(Orders from outside the U. S. are payable \$2.44 cash with order. Leather binding outside U. S. \$3.44 cash with order.)



"Goodbye, I'm Very Glad to Have Met You"

But he ISN'T glad. He is smiling to hide his confusion. He would have given anything to avoid the embarrassment he has just experienced. Every day people who are not accustomed to good society make the mistake that he is making. Do you know what it is?

#### Are You Ever "Along" in a Crowd?

Good manners make good mixers. The man or woman who is able to do the correct and cultured thing without stopping to think about it, is the man or woman who is always welcome, always popular, always happy and at ease.



#### What's Wrong in This Picture?

It is so easy to make embarrassing mistakes in public—so easy to commit blunders that make people misjudge you. Can you find the mistake or mistakes that are made in this picture?

Please mention NEWSSTAND GROUP when answering advertisements

December



Vol. LXXII

DECEMBER, 1923

No. 4

*The*  
**SMART SET**  
*The*  
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*Magazines*

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## *Editorial Announcement*

*The undersigned retire with this issue from the editorship of THE SMART SET.*

*George Jean Nathan*  
*Finch*

## *Publisher's Announcement*

**T**HE present editors of THE SMART SET are withdrawing from the work carried on together since 1914 with the present issue.

Succeeding them in the editorship is Mr. Morris Gilbert, a contributor to the magazine for a period of years whose work is well known to its public. With his accession, the policy of the magazine will revert to that of its early days when, as an all-fiction publication, it led the American field in popularity.

THE SMART SET will henceforth devote itself to fiction of much wider appeal

than that which it has offered in the last decade. While an attempt will be made to maintain the present high standard, a further attempt will be made at distinct popularization. The magazine will not confine itself to any particular species of fiction. It will print the very best stories, regardless of theme, that it can obtain—and to this end it has enlisted the services of some of the American public's favorite entertainers. Love, adventure, mystery, romance—the entire range of human dreams and emotions will be recaptured in the fiction form.

THE SMART SET, under its new policy, will conflict with no other magazine published at present in the United States. Just as its field was entirely its own in the early Nineteen Hundreds, so will its field in the future be distinctly and entirely individual.

With the next number, the price will be reduced to twenty cents.

*G. J. Warner*  
Publisher.



## Housewife

By Muna Lee

### I

**T**HOUGH a frail moon by daytime  
Tiptoe past the trees,  
And the dear mist be earth's garment,  
I may not dream with these.

Three times daily  
They come to me for their food:  
Take, eat: this bread is my body,  
This wine is my blood!

### II

Because we loved sleet and windy weather,  
Walking into winter, comrades of the storm,  
We must dwell in a sheltered house together,  
Piling up the knotty sticks to make a chill room warm.

Because a starry night was like a crying clarion  
That roused to exultation the dreams of me and you,  
I hang starched curtains before all the windows  
So that the starlight cannot filter through.



# The Poseur

[*A Complete Short Novel*]

By *F. Hugh Herbert*

[*Author of "Pilgrimage," Etc.*]

## I

WHEN Peter Dunn was less than ten years old he wrote a poem called "The Anarchist's Death."

It was a mechanically perfect verse on a ludicrously macabre theme and, for a small boy, was really quite good. Mr. Dunn, who was perhaps a little prouder than the average parent, had it typed, with numerous carbon copies, and showed it to all his friends, who patted Peter on the head and said:

"So you're going to be a poet, are you?"

To which Peter, blushing profusely, replied diffidently, "Oh, well—I don't know—"

But inwardly he thought the poem wonderful. It staggered him to think that he had actually written a poem entitled "The Anarchist's Death." Twenty times a day he looked furtively at the neatly typewritten sheet, and particularly at the line "By Peter Adolph Dunn." He was not a little awed by the possibility that he might perhaps be a genius.

The Dunns lived just outside London, in the shadow of the Crystal Palace, and much of Peter's childhood had been spent in and about that depressing edifice. Peter, like most schoolboys who lived in its vicinity, had a season ticket to the Palace, of which he made full use.

He would wander by the hour along its musty corridors, and idle away his time among the booths where cigarettes and chocolates could be purchased.

The grounds, too, were full of interest with their vast reproductions of prehistoric monsters. Here Peter found the inspiration for "The Anarchist's Death." He had scribbled it in a penny notebook while perched on the hideous head of an ichthyosaurus.

Peter was a delicate child, and seemed to be perpetually convalescent from some ailment or other. He was dark, inclined to be fat, and very small for his age. He was very nervous, and would start violently when addressed unexpectedly. He was always twisting his hands about, or scratching himself, and one of his earliest recollections was of a voice—a vague generic voice that belonged to a succession of nursemaids and governesses—a voice saying continually and monotonously:

"Peter, *don't* fidget with your hands."

Then for several minutes Peter would try to stop fidgeting, and put his hands in his pockets, and then the voice would change its plea to a very clearly emphasized:

"Peter, *take* your hands out of your pockets. . . ."

Governesses divide children roughly into two classes. Some are "pets" and the others are "trials." They all thought Peter was a pet when they first saw him. He had a very winning smile, and many pretty ways. He jumped up to open doors, and tried in every respect to live up to his mother's notion of what a little gentleman should be. But in the end they all found him a trial.

Peter indulged in moods. At the age



of six he had discovered that by projecting himself into a species of cataleptic trance after a violent outburst of temper, he could terrify his mother into acquiescence in almost anything he wanted to do. Peter made a mental note of this fortuitous circumstance and employed the knowledge often. He would flare up, shaking his fists and writhing his fat little body and would then stop short in the middle of it, rolling his eyes. Then he slowly relaxed and stared straight ahead of him, pretending that he could neither hear nor see anything for several minutes. For hours after he would sit morose and sullen, muttering to himself and looking carefully to see whether anyone was watching him.

His mother had taken him to the family physician, an amiable, inefficient practitioner, who knew little of medicine, less of children and nothing whatsoever of psychology. He had said gravely and portentously, in Peter's hearing:

"The child is most neurotic—you must be careful to avoid all excitement."

Peter didn't know what neurotic meant, but he looked it up in the dictionary the moment he found an opportunity, and was pleasantly flattered to think that such an adjective should be applied to him. It was shortly after this visit to the doctor that the poem was written.

Peter went to Lawton's Preparatory School for the Sons of Gentlemen. It was quite a remarkable school in that Mr. Lawton, its principal, was a comparatively young man who was really enthusiastic about his work. He was radical enough to believe that his school should be a seat of learning rather than a means to a comfortable income with as little effort as possible to himself. In this he differed from the vast majority of those who owned and operated preparatory schools for the sons of gentlemen, who were recruited mostly from the ranks of lazy, broken-down, old schoolmasters.

Peter enjoyed going to school, and Mr. Lawton, delighted to find a small

boy with greater interests than the accumulation of cigarette cards, took him, figuratively speaking, to his bosom.

Twice a week there was a half holiday at Lawton's, dedicated in summer to cricket and in winter to soccer. Peter loathed cricket. He was always frightened of being hit by the unpleasantly hard ball and he could never hit the ball himself when he went to bat. He was confused by the shouts of the players and the plaudits of the onlookers. And, incidentally, he thought cricket was a silly game, though he never had the courage to express this heresy. There was only one redeeming feature about the game—it permitted Peter to wear his white flannels and the red blazer and cap with "L.P.S." embroidered on them in gold, and Peter secretly thought he looked very distinguished in them. He always wore his shirt open at the neck, which he thought looked very virile and effective.

But if Peter hated cricket, his feelings for soccer almost beggar definition. He thought it the vilest and most offensive sport ever conceived by man. In the first place it necessitated the exposure of Peter's bare knees. All the other boys seemed to have brown, hard, calloused knees, and some, even at that age, were already conspicuously hirsute. Peter's knees were fat, white, soft and dimpled, like a little girl's, and he was heartily ashamed of them.

But on days other than half holidays, Peter was happy. He was always at the head of his class, so much so, in fact, that he was given special work to do. He felt infinitely superior to the other little boys who found it hard enough to keep up with the routine work at Lawton's.

Peter, of course, was a physical coward. Pain not only terrified him, but nauseated him. There was a large apple orchard in the back garden at Lawton's, and every year the boys were permitted to indulge in one "apple fight." They spent days gathering up all the little green apples which had fallen off the trees, until there were two

great piles of them at opposite ends of the orchard. Then they would pick sides, and with hoarse yells and shouts of laughter, they would pelt each other with the apples, dodging behind the trees to avoid the missiles. If struck fairly and squarely on the head, they were, "on their honors," to drop out of the game as "dead."

Peter was always in a cold sweat of fear for days preceding this annual battle, and Mr. Lawton was not unaware of this. He tried to encourage Peter, and urged him to enter into the spirit of the sport in the same lusty manner as his playmates, but Peter couldn't. He always pictured himself struck violently on the nose by a gigantic apple, and bleeding to death. . . . His breath used to come in little gasps as he imagined his lungs filled with blood. But he never begged permission to absent himself from the field of battle. He was even more terrified of ridicule than of pain. He forced himself to throw one or two apples, and give a few half-hearted yells, and then he would lie prone, claiming to be one of the first casualties. The other little boys were much too busy to question the validity of his claim, so Peter was permitted to lie unmolested, while the air was filled with flying apples and shouts of merriment. . . .

When Peter was thirteen, he left Lawton's and went to a public school. At this age he was definitely suffering from a weak heart, and to his huge delight, was excused from all games. He was now an undersized, unhealthy-looking child, with a mass of untidy, black hair, and with dark, brown, glowing eyes that were ever restless. . . . He was much troubled with thoughts of God and sex, and nobody seemed anxious to discuss these with him.

He was not popular with his schoolmates. He seemed to have no interests in common with boys of his age. He shared a study with a cheerful youth named Brockham, who proudly claimed that he could take any steam engine to pieces, and frequently did so. As a relaxation from his mechanical

researches, Brockham collected picture postcards of actresses. This hobby Peter could tolerate more easily. It annoyed him to see the amiable Brockham laboriously grinding in a valve, and filling the air with the unpleasant sweetness of metal dust and carbon, but when Brockham dragged out his post card album, Peter would leave his book and discuss with him quite intimately the relative anatomical charms of Marie Lloyd and Gertie Miller.

Peter's first report from Mr. Groyne-Smith, his housemaster, startled his parents considerably. The man had written: "He is far too self-centered, and seems to have been spoiled at home. He is not sufficiently diffident when re-proved. He never does anything which merits a caning, which is unfortunate, for I believe a caning would do him a lot of good."

Peter, asked to explain this curious report, had very little comment to make.

"The man's a poisonous swine," he said dispassionately, "and he hates me because I argue with him, and because I'm always right."

Both Peter and Mr. Groyne-Smith were correct. A good caning would have done Peter all the good in the world and, furthermore, Mr. Groyne-Smith, though hardly a poisonous swine, did hate Peter for the given reason. It is undoubtedly irritating for a middle-aged housemaster to have his logic questioned and found deficient by a small boy of thirteen.

For instance, there was the case of the new mahogany door. At great personal expense Mr. Groyne-Smith had torn down the old baize covered door which divided his private dwelling from the schoolhouse, and replaced it by a magnificent, shiny, highly polished mahogany door. Furthermore, it was a swing door, that could open in either direction and it closed silently by means of a pneumatic valve at the top. Mr. Groyne-Smith, who delighted in small things, was immensely proud of this door, with its bevelled glass panels

specially designed to receive the imprint of hot and dirty hands.

To Peter the door meant less than nothing. There were many equally good doors in the Dunn home, and several more ornate. Therefore, as he approached it one day with his arms full of books, he disdained to shift his burden in such a manner as to permit him to push the door open with his hands, but used instead the heavily nailed sole of his boot, and none too gently. The door swung open violently, almost grazing the nose of Mr. Groyne-Smith who happened to be on the other side.

"I wish you would be more careful, Dunn," said the housemaster coldly, adjusting his pince-nez.

Then as the door continued to swing violently, he noticed the imprint of Peter's boot upon the polished wood.

He seized Peter roughly by the shoulder.

"Did you kick that door open, you little vandal?" His voice was high pitched with excitement.

"Certainly," said Peter. "My arms were full of books."

"Just look at the mark you've made, you destructive little animal," Mr. Groyne-Smith yelped, and to permit Peter a closer view, he seized him by the ear, and put his nose within an inch of the damaged enamel.

Peter, frightened, and not knowing exactly what to do, passed a forefinger lightly over the scarred surface and murmured something about it being a pity. He knew that he was expected to make groveling apologies, but he felt no inclination to do so.

Mr. Groyne-Smith's rising temper went completely out of control. He boxed Peter's ears with both hands.

Peter, smarting under the pain and humiliation of this assault, glared at his housemaster with indignant hatred. He stooped to retrieve his books, ignoring the man's presence.

The outraged Mr. Groyne-Smith itched to kick the fat and provocative anatomy thus presented to his gaze. He

began to denounce Peter again, spluttering with anger.

"Don't you box my ears again," said Peter hurriedly as he observed a convulsive movement of the master's arm, "don't you dare strike me—you're not supposed to strike a pupil—I'll report you to the head if you do."

And Mr. Groyne-Smith, knowing that Peter was right, grunted a harsh admonition not to do it again, and ambled off, humming in an effort to show a composure he certainly did not feel. He wondered uneasily whether Peter would report him to the head, and if so, what action would be taken. To strike a pupil, other than to administer an official caning, was, as he knew, highly irregular. For the rest of the day Mr. Groyne-Smith vented his wrath and apprehension upon his amiable and pregnant wife, reducing the lady to tears.

Meanwhile, Peter, greatly excited, gave highly colored versions of his encounter to groups of admiring youngsters. By the evening the current version of the affair was that Mr. Groyne-Smith had made humble apologies and that Peter had magnanimously withdrawn his threat of reporting the incident to the head, contingent upon the housemaster's future good conduct.

This, and many similar incidents, did not endear him to Mr. Groyne-Smith or to any of the masters. His work was exemplary, even brilliant, but he was not liked. Few boys who fail to shine at cricket or soccer can attain any measure of popularity at an English Public School.

Peter took no interest whatever in the inter-house matches which were passionately contested and discussed throughout the term. He did not even go to watch their outcome, for which he was taken to task by Mr. Groyne-Smith.

"Is there any rule compelling me to watch a housematch?" Peter inquired.

"No, but you ought to be sufficiently interested in the welfare of your House to go down and cheer on your team—since you're not physically able to rep-



resent the House on any team yourself."

Peter shrugged his shoulders.

"You don't take any interest in the House, do you?" said Mr. Groyne-Smith.

He invariably emphasized the aspirate in House, pronouncing it as if it were some sacred word.

"No, I don't," said Peter, honestly, "not so far as games are concerned." Mr. Groyne-Smith was aghast.

"Have you no—no patriotism," he asked, rhetorically. Peter considered for a moment.

"I can't really say that I have," he answered finally in the light conversational tone which irritated Mr. Groyne-Smith—and all the masters—beyond measure. "Nationality is really just as arbitrary as—as my being in your house and not in the schoolhouse or one of the other houses; I never asked to be born an Englishman and I didn't ask to come to this house. Well, just because I happen to be English, and also just because I happened to come to your house, I can't really see why I ought to work myself up into a state of enthusiasm which I don't naturally feel. You see, what I feel about it is this—"

Peter was enjoying himself. He loved to talk. He was cut short by the elaborately bored voice of Mr. Groyne-Smith.

"Really, Dunn—I'm not at all interested in your peculiar views. You may go."

Peter went back to his study, and curled up on his couch, an ingenious construction of deck chairs, steamer rugs, and trunks. From under the couch he produced Vol. VII of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, in which he was soon absorbed. His selection of literature was not, however, dictated by a passion for historical research. According to Brockham there were several very juicy passages in the work which well merited a search. Peter had found one already—a detailed and lurid account of a Roman orgy given by one Tigellinus. As Peter read, and re-read this graphic

account, he shifted his fat little body constantly on the couch, squirming uneasily. He envied Tigellinus from the bottom of his heart, and wondered, with an amused grin, whether Tigellinus had ever represented his House at throwing the discus. . . .

## II

IN his selection of Keeling as a Public School for Peter, Mr. Dunn was quite as happy as in his choice of Lawton's as a preparatory school. Keeling was one of the few Public Schools where a boy could, if he so desired, attain the Sixth form and still believe that babies were miraculously delivered in the doctor's black bag. The absorbing topics of birth and conception were not the constant subject of puerile ribaldry, as in most Public Schools, nor was a Sixth form youth of seventeen necessarily despised because he was unaware that the Alhambra promenade was used for other purposes than promenading. In short, Keeling was comparatively clean.

At the age of seventeen, Peter, whose health had slightly improved, was still small, stunted, and too fat, but his cheeks and eyes glowed with a semblance of health. He was precocious and childishly cynical at this age, and the old conviction that he might possibly be a genius, which had been dormant for years, now flamed anew. For Peter had written an erotic essay, slightly blasphemous, entitled "*—And They Say That God Is Love!*" (the exclamation mark he considered vital) which had been published by a radical magazine with a circulation (guaranteed) of 900. Peter never told his parents about this essay, and even had it printed under a nom de plume, though the precaution, in view of the magazine's limited appeal, was rather superfluous.

Peter liked his parents and would have loved them, but they got on his nerves. Mrs. Dunn was a well meaning, but absent-minded woman, who seemed to have been born incurably

middle-aged. In great crises, such as death and birth, she was calm and never worried, but she would wear herself to a shadow trying to remember whether she had locked the back door or something equally unimportant.

Peter began by confiding many of his thoughts to her, but he gave it up once he found that while she pretended to listen, her thoughts were really miles away.

"Mother, you're not listening," he accused, deeply hurt.

"Yes, dear, I *was* listening. Go on."

"What was I saying?"

"Why you were saying that you—that you—well, dear, I'll be honest—my thoughts did stray for a moment—I'm trying to think how your aunt Edith told me those muslin curtains ought to be made. She said something about cutting them on the bias so that they wouldn't—"

Peter got up. His lips were trembling. "I think that when I do you the honor—yes, *it is an honor*—to tell you my deepest and most sacred thoughts, you might at least listen and not worry about Edith's futile curtains."

It was obvious that he was deeply hurt. There were tears in his voice and in his eyes. Mrs. Dunn proceeded to make matters worse.

"I remember what you were saying now," she remarked brightly, "you were telling me that you would like to have three children when you were married. . . ." This seemed to amuse her.

"You're such a funny boy," she went on, smiling, "why you're only a baby yourself—only just seventeen—you ought not to be thinking of marrying and having children yet!"

Peter looked at her coldly. There were many times when he found it difficult to believe that this was indeed his mother, and now he felt infinite miles apart.

Mrs. Dunn was a thin, frail woman who frequently enjoyed long spasms of what she called "nervous headaches" and what Peter secretly called nervous fiddlesticks. During these spells she

lay on her bed (never in it) uncorseted, with an old quilt thrown over her insignificant form. The room was darkened, and over the whole home there hung a depressing hush. Servants passing each other on the stairs "sshh-ed" each other with penetrating sibilance, and there came to her room a constant stream of hot water, eau de cologne, aspirin, menthol and other medicaments calculated to alleviate her pain.

### III

PETER'S precocious and premature longings for offspring of his own were largely caused by Jane Phelps, the four-year-old daughter of the Dunn's next door neighbors. Unlike most children at the close of the last century, she had not been brought up on the theory that little girls should be seen and not heard. Jane was seen and heard from morning till night, to such an extent that she was usually referred to by surfeited and unsentimental adults as "that terrible Phelps brat."

Even at the age of four a female child can detect with uncanny intuition those who are susceptible to flattery. She read Peter like a book. She first made his acquaintance one morning when Peter, home for the Easter holidays, was sitting in the garden absorbed in a novel. Most of his holidays were spent in reading novels, a fact which distressed his parents greatly. Mrs. Dunn, who never walked a step if she could help it, was constantly urging him to take exercise.

"There are such lovely walks around here, my boy," she often said. "Why don't you take the dog and walk over to Dulwich?"

"Will you come?" Peter asked.

"I'd love to, but you know walking always gives me a headache."

"I've rather a headache myself," Peter lied tentatively, and when he found that the excuse sufficed, he made a note of the fact and his distressing spasms of migraine dated from that occasion.

Mr. Dunn also objected to Peter's

voracious consumption of novels. He constantly nagged Peter to visit the London museums and art galleries, and sometimes on his way to the city he would take Peter and leave him on the steps of the British Museum, with instructions to meet him on the train that night.

For the first few times Peter dutifully entered the Museum, and was bored beyond belief. Later he found that Bloomsbury was only a few moments' walk from Soho, and consequently, the moment his father's hansom had trotted round the corner, Peter made tracks for Shaftsbury Avenue, where in a hundred yards, he learned more of life than he could have been bothered to find in the fifteen miles of shelves and showcases in the British Museum.

In particular he loved to browse among the second-hand books piled high in bins in front of bookshops in the Charing Cross Road, and long before he was seventeen, he had an extensive knowledge of the White Slave Traffic from this source. . . . Always, too, just as he was becoming absorbed in some particularly lurid treatise, the shabby and fish-eyed proprietor would come to the door of his establishment and ask him pointedly whether he wished to buy the book, and Peter would let it slide back into the bin, and, with burning cheeks, walk aimlessly away. But there were always other stores and other bins. . . . Dirty and tattered copies of *La Vie Parisienne*, illustrated tomes dealing with obstetrics—fascinating little volumes containing Facts a Young Married Woman Ought to Know. . . . And in the evening, Peter, who was already a facile liar, would describe his researches in the British Museum, and ask his gratified father intelligent questions.

But whenever he could, he read novels in the garden at home, and it was here that he met little Jane, who aroused his paternal yearnings.

Jane had a nineteen-year-old sister, whom Peter was to meet later, but to all intents and purposes, she might have

been an only child. She was a cheerful mite, with an endearing habit of looking up to those from whom she desired anything as if they were gods. Dogs possess this same attribute, but with them it is not so disingenuous.

Jane crawled through a hole in the fence, and waiving the formality of an introduction, invited Peter to mend a broken toy. This having been satisfactorily accomplished, she climbed onto his knee and demanded a fairy story. Peter obliged with a very free rendering of Cinderella, enlivened by many quaint and original touches of his own. Jane sat entranced and, at its termination, demanded more.

"I think," she said, "that you tell the most *marvelous* stories in the world."

Peter grinned appreciatively and told her others, sorry that his audience was so limited. He felt that the stories were excellent. He lay back in his deck chair, comfortably, lazily, amused at the rapid play of emotions over Jane's mobile face as he plunged alternately from tragedy to comedy. Now and again he looked up at the window of the neighbor's home and hoped that somebody was watching them.

Jane began to fondle his face with her moist, dirty little hands.

"Will you tell me stories every day?" she coaxed. He smiled and nodded.

"How many?"

"Lots! Do you like 'em?"

"They're heaps better than those my mummy tells me, and father doesn't know any at all."

Suddenly Peter felt that this baby was dearer to him than any creature on God's earth. He pushed back the curls from her forehead and kissed her. He was calculating . . . four from seventeen—thirteen—well, there had been cases where a boy of thirteen had become a father; his researches in the Encyclopedia Britannica had taught him that. Now, if he were a year or two older and Jane a year or so younger—say at fifteen or sixteen—well, yes, he could easily claim to be old enough to be Jane's father. . . .

Peter felt in his pocket and found



fourpence. He was allowed sixpence a week pocket money, a sum which he felt to be extremely inadequate for one of his age. Sixpence a week—and he old enough to be the father of a four-year-old child—or about old enough anyway . . .

"Would you like some sweets, baby?" he asked Jane patronizingly. Jane smacked her lips eloquently and vulgarly.

Several minutes later, Peter, leading Jane by the hand, walked slowly toward the sweet shop. He bent down constantly to talk to the child. He fidgeted with the elastic hat band that went round her chin, and with the collar of her little dress. First he put it outside her little tweed coat, later he tucked it in. Twice he knelt down to pull up her socks. Even Jane was irritated.

"Don't," she said shrilly, as he straightened her hat for the fifth time, "I'm all right," and she smacked his hand.

"Naughty, naughty," said Peter portentously. He was enjoying himself. Several people had turned round to look at them and he was convinced they took him for the child's father.

#### IV

His meeting with Jane was, in many respects, a turning point in his career.

He began to write again, but this time he attempted neither macabre verse nor erotic essay. That night he sat down and wrote out one of the fairy stories he had invented for Jane's benefit. He wrote until midnight and then read it through perhaps half a dozen times, amazed at his fluency. It was typical of him that he did not have to wonder if it was good. He knew it was good. The style was easy, polished, finished. The story was simple, amusing, well told. He trembled slightly as he turned down the gas and got into bed. Perhaps, after all, he was a genius. In his excitement he bit his nails. . . .

The next morning he read his story again, and, if anything, he was even

more enthusiastic. He determined to send it to a magazine at once.

"I say, father," he began diffidently at breakfast, "could you—could you let me have five bob? I want it for something special."

Mr. Dunn, who was always solemn, was more than usually solemn at breakfast, which had become a rite rather than a meal in his home. He always had breakfast after his wife and son, alone, austere, while Mrs. Dunn and a parlormaid were silent acolytes at his shrine and Peter was permitted to watch.

"Five shillings, my boy, is a lot of money," he said with a frown, "and I should most certainly want to know what for."

Peter considered. He felt that he couldn't show his father the story—he would never understand it. How could a Mincing Lane tea merchant appreciate a story entitled "The Silver Paper Princess?"

"It's something I've written, and I want to get it typed," he said finally.

"Give it to me," said Mr. Dunn, "I will have it typed for you at the office. Marshall will do it."

Peter knew Marshall, his father's confidential secretary. He was a pale, blond automaton, with paper cuffs and lily-white, almost transparent hands, who was not so much Mr. Dunn's private secretary as his mental wet nurse. He often came to the house to take instructions from his employer, and Peter had learned to dislike him heartily, although Mr. Dunn lauded him to the skies as an invaluable treasure.

Marshall, Peter remembered, had smiled wanly when he had congratulated Peter upon writing "The Anarchist's Death." Well, Marshall wasn't going to get an opportunity to smile in that futile, obsequious manner over Peter's fairy tale.

"Listen, father," said Peter, "I'd rather get this done at some place where they do typing, if you don't mind—I don't want to trouble you—I'd much rather—really . . ."

Mrs. Dunn joined in the discussion.

Five shillings were at stake and she had a mania for petty economies.

"Don't be so ridiculous, my boy," she said. "Give your little story or whatever it is to your father and he will get it done for nothing."

But Peter was stubborn. He didn't want his father to have it, and throughout breakfast he pestered him for the necessary five shillings. Besides it annoyed him to have "The Silver Paper Princess" referred to as "the little story or whatever it is." His mother was always saying vague, stupid things like that.

"No!" said Mr. Dunn from time to time as Peter, in his eagerness, allowed his plea to sink to a whine.

Mr. Dunn finished his breakfast, slowly and deliberately, wiping his untidy, discouraged looking mustache with his napkin several times very briskly to remove all traces of egg. Then he produced a little pocket comb with which he fondled his upper lip.

"Let me see what you have written," he asked his son gravely.

Peter hesitated, feeling very uncomfortable. What would his father think of the story? Or, more particularly, what would he say of it? Peter was never at ease with his father. They never discussed anything but the most banal topics, a fact which distressed the boy, who would have enjoyed the intimacy which often exists between father and son. No intimacy existed between Peter and his father. Once when Peter was fourteen Mr. Dunn had called him to the library and attempted to have with him one of those heart-to-heart talks which amiable middle-aged authors, usually bachelors, describe in their books on the education of children in the chapter usually entitled "Problems of Puberty."

Peter had hurriedly made it clear to his parent that the great problems of birth and reproduction had already been expounded to him by an accommodating housemaster, and Mr. Dunn, enormously relieved, had concluded the

heart-to-heart talk with a mumbled reference to the fact that Peter must always look to him as his best friend. Peter often reflected, however, that but for the physiological relationship between them, his father was an absolute stranger to him. He saw him for a few minutes at breakfast every morning, and for an hour in the evening, perhaps, and they discussed the weather, because everybody did, and cricket, because they each thought the other was interested, and occasionally Peter was asked to account for the time and money being spent upon his education.

Secretly, however, Peter had a great contempt for his father's mentality, and chafed under the necessity which made him still dependent upon him. Mr. Dunn, who was gifted with intuition beyond the average, felt that Peter despised him as an intellectual inferior, and resented it, all the more so because he knew it to be justified. He had hoped for a son who would grow into the tea business and become in due time a respected figure in Mincing Lane.

Peter refused even to go down to visit his father's offices, and at every suggestion that he enter the tea business, had said, "Why, father, I'd sooner starve!" . . .

And now his father was asking to see something which he couldn't possibly appreciate. . . . Peter, while he still hesitated, could picture Mr. Dunn's forehead wrinkle and crease as he read the precious manuscript—could hear his voice, a very toneless and refined voice, inquire, "My boy, what is all this about—what is it?" That's what he would say, in that rather vapid way of his, "What is it?"

"I'd rather you didn't see it, father," said Peter bluntly. Mr. Dunn flushed.

"Is it perhaps something that I shouldn't see?" he inquired icily. The question was perfunctory. He knew very well that Peter considered the manuscript over his head, and the knowledge annoyed him.

"Peter, dear," said Mrs. Dunn, "why don't you show your father the little story or whatever it is? Go and fetch it; there's a good boy!"

With a shrug of the shoulders Peter went to his room and brought the story to his father. Mrs. Dunn moved her chair nearer to her husband's and the parents read it together, while Peter watched their faces hungrily from across the table. As page after page was turned, and no smile of understanding illumined either face, Peter came nearer to hating his parents than ever before. . . . When the last page was turned, Mrs. Dunn was the first to speak.

"Of course I know nothing about such things," she said—this being one of her favorite gambits in any conversation—"but it seems rather—how shall I say—rather senseless to me, my boy! I'm sure you can do better," she beamed.

Mr. Dunn licked his mustache repeatedly, a nervous movement to which he was addicted.

"I agree with your mother," he said finally, "I, too, am sure you can do much better! However, I will get it typed for you if you wish."

Burning tears were blinding Peter's eyes. They didn't understand—he *knew* they would never understand—In that moment he felt very sorry for them—poor, unintelligent creatures, who, God only knew why, had been selected for his procreation.

"Here, give me the manuscript," he said, and strolled to the door. "I'll try—I'll try and do better! The door banged and presently another door higher up was heard to bang. He had obviously gone to his room.

Husband and wife exchanged glances.

"The boy was hurt," observed Mr. Dunn meditatively. "We ought to have praised it a little."

"But it was such a senseless little story or whatever it was meant to be," said his wife. . . .

Upstairs, Peter sat on his bed, scowling, and fought back the tears. Presently he went out into the garden and found solace in Jane.

## V

NEVERTHELESS, the story was sent to a magazine, for, several days later, a ten shilling postal order from a chronically generous uncle came as a wind-fall, and Peter was able to have his manuscript typed. It was accepted, and the editors, in acknowledging the contribution, invited Peter to send further stories on the same lines.

For days, Peter was in the seventh heaven. He carefully steered the conversation around to the subject of light fiction, and then casually showed the editors' letter. He visited friends whom he had never dreamed of calling upon, and showed them the letter. In ten days he must have shown it to hundreds of people. . . .

He immediately bought immense quantities of manuscript paper, large manila envelopes and other stationers' supplies, and nearly ruptured himself trying to move an old desk from the attic to his bedroom unassisted. He knew now what his career would be—he was going to write. He was going to make Grimm and Andersen look like second-rate back numbers. His name would ring throughout the civilized world. All children would bless his name—

A check for two guineas for the first story was now received and fanned his enthusiasm to fever heat. Two guineas—and he was only a beginner—why, he could easily write one every day—maybe even two—certainly he could write two a day—seven fours are twenty-eight—twenty-eight guineas a week! A fortune! And when he was better known he would get more than two guineas for each story—he might even get ten—ten times seven, times two—

He was still very young.

He wrote one more story, and then, the holidays being at an end, he had to go back to school.

The second story was rejected. Encouraged by his first success, Peter, like many better and older men, had taken literary liberties.



## VI

NINETEEN found Peter prematurely old and quarreling acrimoniously with his parents. He had left school and refused to go to college.

"But, my boy," said Mr. Dunn, "it gives a man such a polish!"

"Rubbish," said Peter rudely. "I'm sick of being taught things, anyway."

His refusal to go to Oxford or Cambridge puzzled his parents and his headmaster alike. He could have won a scholarship at either, but he had resolutely refused.

Peter, being physically insignificant, was never happy in a crowd. He was awkward and shy, and very conscious of his limitations. Above all, he dreaded ridicule. Just as the anticipation of the apple fight had been an exquisite terror to him in childhood so the contemplation of physical violence to his person at the hands of boisterous undergraduates nauseated him.

At nineteen he was still undersized and unhealthy looking. He hated to meet people, because his hands were perpetually clammy, and he was very conscious of this when shaking hands. His hair was filled with dandruff, which descended like a fine drizzle of snow onto his shoulders whenever he scratched his head, which he did often.

. . . There were long hairs on his nose too, and he spent many a painful half hour extracting these individually with a pair of tweezers. His hands were unusually small for a boy of his age and very susceptible to chilblains.

He was bitterly disappointed in his appearance. As a child, at Lawton's, he had secretly held the belief that he was very good looking. Now the best that he could say of himself was that he was unusual looking. Interesting. Perhaps if he brushed his hair back he might even look distinguished. He had a good forehead. He tried brushing the hair back, but the dandruff came down too far on his brow and was so thick he hastily returned to his former coiffure.

He had no intimate friends at this

age and only few acquaintances. Mr. Dunn had taken him once to his club and it had been an ordeal for both which was never repeated.

"I can't understand the boy," Mrs. Dunn said to her husband. "He seems so—so strange and distant! Really, at times I feel he's a guest in the house! And yet he's very considerate and sweet," she went on. "When I was ill he seemed terribly upset, and there were tears in his eyes whenever he kissed me and told me to be quick and get well—"

Mr. Dunn sucked at his pipe and said nothing but his thoughts were bitter. He was very disappointed in his son, and, man-like, he blamed his wife.

"I don't think you brought him up right," he said, "and of course"—here he touched on a subject which had ever been a rift in his matrimonial lute—"if he had had a brother or a sister—he would have been a very different boy."

Mrs. Dunn began to weep. "Now, Oscar,—please don't start all that over again—you know Dr. Meiklejohn said when Peter was born "that I must *never* have another baby—and I think it very unkind of you to harp on it. As if I wouldn't have *loved* another baby. . . .

Mr. Dunn sucked noisily at his pipe and refrained from comment. In his opinion, Meiklejohn was a darned old fool—telling people how many babies they ought to have—usurping the privilege of God—interfering with his happiness—He was secretly convinced that his wife could have had a baby every year with consummate ease. All his family had been very prolific. His younger brother Cedric, whom he employed in his Mincing Lane offices, had five children, and he remembered that Cedric had always been considered a very puny individual.

## VII

Just before his twentieth birthday, and when the Boer war was at its height, Peter became a reporter on the

*Daily Mail.* It was an entirely spontaneous idea. He was strolling along Fleet Street when a heavy horse-drawn truck crashed into the window of a shop. A crowd immediately gathered, and was further augmented when a woman for no apparent reason whatever, since there was no bloodshed, fainted. Men and women pushed and scrambled, trying to get to the front and have a clear view. Peter was well in the rear and was standing on tiptoe, trying to see over the heads of the milling, surging mob. He was pushed from side to side, and cursed his insignificant stature. Suddenly a policeman appeared, and, as if by magic, the crowd parted to give him access. It is only in London that one policeman, unarmed and unaided, with a few gentle, good-natured shoves, can subdue and clear a pathway through a mob. Immediately behind the policeman, there came a confident-looking individual in a bowler hat who immediately began to engage the driver of the truck and the outraged owner of the shop in conversation. Speculation as to the identity of this favored individual was promptly silenced by several voices.

"E's a reporter," said one.

"That's Philips of the *Star*," said another.

"Noospaper bloke," said a third.

At that moment Peter became a reporter. Another policeman was passing through the crowd. Peter followed him. Quite superfluously he showed a card and murmured "Press" to the little group of protagonists.

Feeling very important, and highly elated over the brilliant success of his ruse, Peter began to question the men. He made meaningless hieroglyphics on the back of an envelope, being quite ignorant of shorthand.

Having committed the meager details of the very ordinary accident to memory, Peter turned his attention to the woman who was recovering from a faint.

"Why did you faint?" he inquired, adding in a kindly patronizing tone,

"tell me all about it—I'm a newspaper man."

Having been assured that her name would appear in print, the woman confessed that she was suffering from what she called, alternately "spassims," "spells" and "severe turns."

"No matter what 'appens," she confided, "even if I only fall down a few stairs or see someone else fall, I have a severe turn. My mother was the same—she had spells the same as me."

The crowd had thinned by now, and the real reporter was still talking to the policeman. Peter shook hands cordially with the chronic sufferer from "spassims" and hurried into a tea shop, where he ordered a cup of tea and some toast. While they were coming, he wrote an account of the incident in very facetious vein on the back of several letters.

Half an hour later he asked to see the editor of the *Daily Mail*. He was given a little slip and asked to write thereon the nature of his business. "To report a journalistic scoop," he wrote.

One of the innumerable sub-editors interviewed him and glanced over the manuscript, smiling as he read it. To him Peter confessed that he would like a job. The man took Peter's manuscript and returned after several minutes.

"I'll take you to the assistant editor," he said. . . .

A few minutes later Peter left the building feeling that the world was his oyster. He was a reporter. His words would be read by millions. . . . How easy it had been! He was assuredly a genius. . . .

## VIII

IN the two years that followed, Peter was absorbed in his chosen profession, and drifted, if possible, still further away from his parents, although he still lived under their roof.

As soon as he was earning enough he rather awkwardly told his father that he would like to contribute to the home-keeping expenses.

Mr. Dunn was hurt.

"When I can no longer *give* my son a home I shall indeed feel that I am a failure," he announced.

"But, father, that's not the point," Peter argued, "I know perfectly well you don't *need* the money, but it makes one feel independent—after all, I'm a man now, and I want to pay my way! Please let me contribute what I would have to pay for the same accommodations in a boarding-house—for my own self-respect I'd like to."

Mrs. Dunn began to weep. It was one of her peculiarities that you were always conscious of her beginning, but never of the fact that she left off.

"What's the matter?" Peter inquired, and clumsily put his arms around the frail shoulders. "Mother, what is the matter?"

Peter's rare demonstration of affection invariably increased his mother's woe.

"Oh, my boy—my boy—" she sobbed monotonously.

"Well, what is it?" he asked, the irritation rasping in his voice.

"That you—that you should talk of your home as a boarding-house!"

For ten minutes Peter explained to her carefully and painstakingly, as one would to a child, that he had done nothing of the kind, but Mrs. Dunn continued to sniff at intervals and refused to be comforted.

Peter now had many friends, mostly eccentric, and though he sometimes brought them home and introduced them to his parents, he would much rather not have done so.

He had become very intimate with an elderly cousin of his father's, a Major Rufus Clyde, of whom the family strongly disapproved.

Major Clyde, although he bore a military title, had never belonged to any organization more martial than the Volunteers. He tried to look like a retired Anglo-Indian officer, but his ruddy complexion was the result of too much alcohol rather than of the burning tropical sun. Briefly, Major Clyde was a rather nasty old man who made his headquarters at the Leicester

Lounge and consorted mainly with the demi-monde who frequented that interesting hostelry. He was a cynical, disillusioned old man, and it aroused a morbid streak in him to help shatter the illusions of a young idealist.

He introduced Peter to shabby artists in Chelsea and flashy ladies in Piccadilly. Under the tutelage of Uncle Rufus, Peter first knew the state of intoxication, and later, in his company, made his first lapse from chastity.

Peter admired him immensely and mirrored his cheap cynicism and plagiarized ribaldry.

"There's one thing I can never understand," said Uncle Rufus, when they were lunching together at his club one day. "I can never understand how your father and mother, excellent creatures though they be, came to be your parents."

This same thought having frequently occurred to Peter himself, he credited Uncle Rufus with great discernment and understanding, and stifled the instinct which told him that it was not exactly nice to listen to Uncle Rufus disparage his parents, as he always did.

Later it was at Uncle Rufus' suggestion that Peter moved into bachelor quarters. It happened several weeks after his twenty-first birthday, and he tried to pass it off as a gesture of his attained majority, but he knew that it had been inevitable for some years, and though he promised his gently weeping mother that he would be home several evenings each week, he knew as he made the promise that he lied. . . .

In the meantime he had once more turned his pen to the writing of quaint fairy stories for children and with considerable success. A volume of them had been published, and though it brought him little enough money, it gained for him the recognition of one or two critics. . . .

He was far more unhappy at leaving Jane Phelps, now a long-legged child of eight, than at leaving his parents.

Ever since their first meeting, he had been devoted to the little girl, who

flattered him continually, and could twist him around her little finger.

She cried bitterly when he left Sydenham and moved into town, and Peter, strangely moved, cried also as he kissed her good-bye.

Later the fact that he did come out several times a week to see his parents was due almost entirely to the promise he had given the child next door, and he was so elaborately casual in his enquiries regarding Jane that Mr. Dunn guessed that he and Mrs. Dunn were merely incidental to their son's visit, and was deeply hurt. But he never said a word. He sucked at his pipe, and licked his mustache, while Peter, his hands in his pockets, stood astride with his back to the fireplace, and talked by the hour of his writings.

Alone with Jane, Peter felt a different being, a simpler, cleaner, happier person. When he was with Jane he knew his Uncle Rufus to be a dirty old man and often wished to break with him. . . . But somehow he didn't. . . .

Because of his fondness for Jane, and in view of his published fairy stories for children, Peter believed that he was irresistible to all children, and persuaded himself that he yearned to father every infant that came his way. As a matter of fact, the average child bored him, although he would never have admitted it.

He was making new friends every day now and whenever he visited the homes of his newspaper colleagues they invariably led him to the nursery and left him with their assorted offspring.

The Kirkham children he positively loathed. Kirkham was a rather prolific artist whom he had met through his Uncle Rufus, and with whom he was wont to discuss life several times a week. He was a weak chinned, sensual man, who had married a barmaid, and they inhabited a shabby and very untidy home off the Tottenham Court Road. The house always smelled of warm beer, for Kirkham kept a barrel of it under the stairs, and it always swarmed with Kirkham's children, who sat up until all hours of the night because no

one had the energy to send them to bed. Peter never knew for certain how many there were and Kirkham himself said "My wife assures me these are all *my* children—but I'm not so sure myself—let's see now—the baby's six weeks old—and I've known you almost a year now—"

That was Kirkham's idea of a good joke and, apparently Mrs. Kirkham's too, for she roared with laughter.

Peter tried to tell the Kirkham children his fairy stories. They listened for two minutes and then Alf, the eldest, aged ten, said to Margie, aged eight.

"C'mon—this is awful bosh—let's go and sail that boat up in the cistern."

With difficulty Peter refrained from boxing Alf's ears, but he controlled himself. He even went up into the attic and helped them sail the boat in the cistern, although he was not invited, and was by no means wanted. . . .

"I'm afraid the children are very boisterous," said Mrs. Kirkham, as Peter took his farewell.

He laughed easily. "Not at all—not at all—I simply adore all children I know."

## IX

So far Peter had had no real love affairs, and, in fact, very little social intercourse with women. Uncle Rufus had introduced him to several ladies of easy virtue, whose flats he visited occasionally, but the proceedings were always of a frankly commercial nature. Behind their pretty, painted faces he had found no spark of sympathy or understanding and, in fact, though he boasted to Uncle Rufus and to Kirkham of his intimacy with these women he was secretly disgusted with himself.

And then, one afternoon when he was visiting his parents in Lydenham, he met Sybil Phelps, Jane's elder sister, a very striking girl, with immense eyes and masses of blue black hair. Sybil was about twenty-five, being almost three years older than Peter, but she didn't look it. She had a skin like a



sunburned baby's—a fascinating perpetual tan that gradually shaded off into a creamy whiteness on her beautifully moulded neck. For several years Sybil had been abroad, studying.

Peter fell in love with Sybil from the first moment of their meeting. Throughout the afternoon he watched her fascinated. He loved everything about her . . . she represented in crystallized form his vague gropings for perfection. He had never supposed that each and every attribute which he found desirable could be concentrated in one woman.

Peter held the theory—or at least professed to hold it—that a man, from his earliest childhood accumulates preferences and makes mental notes, which together constitute his ideal of a woman. . . . He explained to his own satisfaction, the promiscuity of man, or his polygamous nature, by the fact, that, failing to find any one woman possessed of all the virtues of his ideal concept, he proceeded to fall in love with those women who were endowed with some at least of these qualifications.

So far Peter had never permitted his amours to go beneath the surface. There had been in fact but two which could be dignified by the name of love affair at all. The first was a pert little waitress, with a saucy mouth, and red, chapped hands, with whom he had philandered for six months. Her name was Mabel, which she pronounced to rhyme with "libel" and she had a passion for cheap and powerful perfume. Peter wanted to seduce her, and Mabel would have been a perfectly willing seducee, for he fascinated her, being the first man to treat her with courtesy, while courting her, but a combination of his own sentimentality and Mabel's horrible perfume saved her. . . . Mabel was a devotee of the Lyceum melodrama and her speech was tainted by this source. Once when Peter took her in a canoe up the river, and she lay in his arms Mabel murmured:

"I feel so sife with you! I feel as if I was a little girl sife in the arms of my father! It's nice to feel sife!"

After that Peter felt that the dis-

honorable intentions he had certainly entertained regarding Mabel were slightly incestuous and he never saw her again.

The second was a dynamic young woman named Polly who worked for a commercial artist. She had dirty finger nails, but beautifully white and even little teeth, with which she bit Peter's lip when teaching him the rudiments of osculation. . . . Later she married a friend of Peter's and sent him post cards telling him when her husband was out of town. . . . For a time Peter had fancied himself in love with Polly, but, as a matter of fact, the pretense was pretty thin—she was too much like Uncle Rufus' women. . . . And they were impossible. . . .

Sybil was utterly different. She was a musician and, in fact, one of the first things Peter noticed about her were her exquisite hands, slender, white, blue veined, yet strong looking hands they were, with perfect almond-shaped nails. Peter looked at them with eyes of adoration.

Sybil's voice was low and prettily modulated. It seemed to Peter like a caress. He, who usually loved to hear himself talk, was strangely silent that afternoon and let Sybil do the talking.

Sybil addressed her remarks alternately to Mr. and Mrs. Dunn, and barely included Peter at all.

The afternoon wore on, and Mrs. Dunn reminded Peter about his train. For the first time Peter wished that he was still living at home. He was completely fascinated by Sybil and wanted to remain near her.

"I say, mother," he said finally, "is my old room in use? I mean—could I stay here tonight? Would you mind?"

He was strangely diffident.

Mrs. Dunn was touched.

"Why Peter—it will be lovely to have you! I'll go and air your room at once." She left the room to make preparations, and presently called from outside to her husband, presumably to discuss this strange move of Peter's. It was the first time since he had moved

into his bachelor rooms that he had ever spent a night with them.

Peter, left alone with Sybil, felt strangely elated. They began a very animated conversation. Sybil had a slight foreign accent, due to her long trip abroad, and had also learned to speak with her hands. Peter found both traits fascinating.

Gradually, as he felt more at ease in her presence, he began to work the conversation around to himself. Throughout the afternoon he had hardly spoken a word. He now desired, as he never desired before, to impress her. Skilfully, subtly, he steered Sybil from the topic of the latest plays to the latest novels, and after that it was quite easy to remark casually.

"Of course, I write too, but I don't suppose you've ever come across my work."

"Oh—is that what you do? Write? Why! I thought you were still at school! You look so young! But you must be quite twenty—why don't you grow a mustache? I think they're so fascinating! Your father has a beauty!"

Peter moistened his lips and became very red and embarrassed. In one breath Sybil had touched half a dozen of his sorest spots. . . . To his great sorrow he was unable to raise a mustache worthy of the name, and of late, despite his continual efforts to look blasé and cynical, he found himself looking younger than before. This was accounted for by his improved health. His scalp was in good condition and he had a complexion like a girl's. He was flushing now as he stammered an answer to Sybil.

"Why—I left school five years ago!" he said, "and I'm now a staff writer on the *Mail*! I've been writing for the papers for years!" Surely that would impress her.

"Whatever for?" Sybil demanded with a laugh.

"Whatever for?" he repeated, so dazed by this question that he was unable to frame a reply. Surely she could not have heard right or she

wouldn't ask such an extraordinary question.

Sybil was highly amused as she watched him gasping.

"Oh, you're so funny!" she giggled. "Mother always told me you took yourself very seriously and your parents warned me this afternoon, but I never *dreamed* you'd be as funny as this!"

Peter suddenly became very dignified.

"What is there intrinsically humorous," he asked, "in the fact that I am a newspaper man?"

"Nothing," said Sybil. "You just amuse me that's all."

Further conversation was impossible, for at that moment the parlormaid came in to commence dinner. It was not a pleasant meal for Peter. Whenever he raised his eyes, he met those of Sybil, and they were always lit up by that mocking smile.

## X

PETER stayed in Sydenham for a month, neglecting his work and his Uncle Rufus in order to pay court to Sybil. He was still trying to impress her, but she refused to be impressed.

She had read his little book of fairy tales at last. Peter, very humbly for him, asked her opinion.

"Pretty—pretty," said Sybil frankly contemptuous. "I wouldn't read them to my children."

"Why not?" he demanded.

"Why not?" she countered. "Because they're not virile enough!"

"That's why! They're sentimental bosh, if you want my honest opinion, and they've been greatly overrated!"

"I'm sorry you don't like them," Peter mumbled.

"I—I'll try and write—something better." He smiled as he remembered his parents' advice after the first one had been written many years ago. Their opinion he had scorned, but hers he accepted humbly.

Sybil was pleased to be brutally frank.

"You'll never write anything fine while you have such an exalted opinion of yourself," she told him. "You think

you're frightfully clever, don't you? Well—maybe you are—who can tell? But there's one thing that's certain—you're the most conceited, precocious young man that ever happened—That's what you are! And it's apparent in every line of your—silly little stories!"

"Jane doesn't think they're silly," said Peter, clutching at this faint straw, and glad of it in the swirling torrent of these home-truths.

"Oh, yes, she does," Sybil affirmed. "Only she's a hypocrite like you! She pretends to like them because you buy her sweets! She's a very shrewd child, is Jane!"

Peter changed the subject, and Sybil was charming to him for the rest of the day.

"When you're natural there's hope for you," she told him that evening when they said good-night.

## XI

At the end of another month Peter, who had been writing night and morning, gave into Sybil's hands the manuscript of his first novel. It had cost him hours of sleeplessness and effort, and he felt that it was good. Into it had gone many fine, brave thoughts, and much precocity. And Peter was immensely proud of it, and particularly of the dedication, which was the first thing he had written. He showed Sybil the neatly typewritten page with trembling hands.

### TO SYBIL WHO WILL UNDERSTAND

"What makes you think so?" asked Sybil flippantly as she began to glance idly through the bulky manuscript.

They were sitting alone in the Dunns' drawing room, and the firelight flickered in her vivacious face, seeming to make it more mischievous and attractive than ever. . . .

Peter was feeling sentimental. He had been living at home now for several months and it seemed to be tacitly

assumed that he would remain there for good. His parents said little but were obviously pleased and gratified. Also he was feeling physically and mentally exhausted. No man can write six thousand words a day for about thirty days, without feeling the effects. It had been a terrific strain, and now that it was over, and the last page written—it was all in longhand and afterward typed, for Peter had resolutely refused to learn how to operate a typewriter—he felt contented, and delightfully drowsy.

Sybil looked so pretty sitting there on the couch, her slender, expressive fingers running rapidly through Peter's typed script, making a gentle whirring sound and sending a little draught of perfumed air into his face. . . . Gradually the thin veneer of sophistication which Peter had elaborately grafted on himself began to chip and splinter . . . yearnings for domesticity surged within his breast. . . . The firelight conjured up dim forgotten memories of the past . . . of his nursery, and the immense convex wire fireguard on which he had toasted his feet as a little boy. . . . He sniffed, trying to recapture the mingled odors of warm flannel and soap that had permeated his nursery . . . could feel for a moment his mother's hands caressing his head. . . . He loved to have his head stroked—Mrs. Dunn had often fondled it, when he was a little boy, but she had no tact, Peter considered. In the middle of it she would suddenly stop and bring a light nearer to his head, and then, with the fingers of both hands, she would part the hairs and closely examine his scalp, as if looking for something. Then Peter would fidget and pull his head away, saying "Don't mother," and she would placidly reply, "But dear, little boys who don't take care often get lice. . . ."

Peter looked at Sybil and gulped. He had no experience in the finesse of polite love making. Mabel had been of the type whom you chucked under the chin, and to whom you said, unctuously "Come on, give us a kiss, now!" to which Mabel said "Sauce!"—and gave

the desired kiss. . . . Polly had really taken the initiative in their affair. . . . In fact Peter, in telling of the affair to Uncle Rufus had said, "She damn near seduced me, you know," and chuckled. . . .

How could one make love to Sybil? She was of that difficult category who are very sensual but nevertheless seem to be surrounded by an aura of chastity and virginity. She did not look as if she would countenance even so modest an intimacy as the holding of hands. Nevertheless Peter tried this method. He took her hand rather clumsily and began to examine the setting of one of the rings. It remained limp within his own, warm, pleasant, very thrilling to him, but lifeless in itself. She made no effort to withdraw it. Peter began to stroke it with a trembling forefinger.

Suddenly, with a faint but unmistakable shudder, Sybil spoke:

"My but your hands are clammy!" She said pleasantly, "Are they always like that?"

Peter felt a sinking in his stomach. How could he wax sentimental after that? He released her hand and sat with his elbows on his knees staring into the fire. . . .

Sybil seemed disposed to talk chattily of trivial matters.

Apropos of nothing at all, she said.

"I think I'd like to be a butcher if I were a man! I was watching Robbins this morning and I bet that man knows more about anatomy than many doctors! My dear, you should have seen the way he was trimming some tripe. . . . And when he rips off the suet it makes such a jolly, even, tearing sound. . . ."

"Don't talk such rubbish," Peter said, rather gruffly, stung by the utter unconsciousness of the careless endearment.

Finally without any preamble, he began to unburden himself. As always, when under the stress of emotion he stuttered and talked too quickly. Also his voice was too far back in his throat and sounded theatrical. Nevertheless he spoke with utter sincerity.

"Sybil," he said, "that novel I've just given you—that manuscript you are holding in your hands—that's," he groped for a telling phrase, "that's absolutely a part of me—"

Sybil raised her eyebrows in amusement.

"What part?" she asked provokingly.

He brushed the remark aside with a deep look of pain, and a hand that shook, as he gesticulated.

He went on:

"It's as much a part of me—as the child a woman bears—for love of a man. I bore it, Sybil, in great pain and travail—" his voice sank to a whisper, and, though he meant each word, he thought, even in that moment, how effective his speech would be, whispered, on a semi-darkened stage—"in great pain and travail," he repeated, "for love of you."

Once more he took her hand, and for an instant he was again a simple, ingenuous, adolescent boy.

"Oh, Sybil—I love you so much," he murmured.

This time she did not laugh at him—openly. Gently she released her hand, and stood up, smoothing out her skirts. She held his manuscript to her breast, and smiled at him in a friendly way.

"I'll go right home and read this now," she told him, "if you will get me my wraps." His profession of love she completely ignored. Peter would almost have preferred outright ridicule. Throughout the evening he tortured himself with vain speculations. Perhaps she hadn't heard . . . perhaps in his excitement he had said something else . . . he knew that cases were known where the subconscious mind had spoken words of which the conscious individual was utterly ignorant. What *had* he said? What *had* he said?

## XII

IN the two days that followed, Peter, for the first time in years, tried the effect of prayer. His religion was extremely vague, and although he had been confirmed in the Church of Eng-



land, he had not been inside a church for years.

Kirkham, who was a Catholic, often discussed religion with him, and Peter rather delighted in shocking his friend by mildly blasphemous views.

"I look upon God," he once affirmed, "as a rather necessary evil. He is, in many respects, not unlike a pawnbroker. When a man is down on his luck he usually turns to God, just as a man goes to the pawnbroker when he's hard up."

"Damn silly allusion!" said Kirkham, sipping his perpetual glass of beer. "Where's your analogy?"

"Well," said Peter, "when you're broke you take your watch to Uncle's and he lends you money on it. Very comforting. And while he has it you pay the interest and are glad of the accommodation. But as soon as you're flush again, out comes the ticket, and you curse the pawnbroker and call him a lousy old Jew. All right. When you're down on your luck, or bereaved or unhappy, what do you do? You go down on your knees and pray, 'Oh God—take thou this cup away from me.' And then if you're half-way religious, or superstitious, you derive a lot of comfort from the thought that the Deity has made a note of your troubles. He lends you comfort—very pleasant, facile solace, and while the mood lasts you pay the interest by grateful prayers. And as you begin to feel better your prayers grow more and more perfunctory until finally they cease altogether. Then you're all right again—you've taken your sorrows out of pawn, and you curse God as an intolerant old maid just as cheerfully as you ever did."

Peter was putting his theory into practice. Every night he prayed, simply and fervently and the burdens of his supplication was two-fold—firstly that Sybil should find his novel good and acceptable unto her, and secondly that she should respond to his daily increasing love.

But Peter's divine pawnbroker failed him in the end. He lent him comfort

during the anxious hours of waiting, but it availed him nothing when Sybil placed his manuscript back into his hands with a faintly amused, and rather pitying smile.

Peter moistened his lips and scratched his head nervously.

"Well," he asked, breathlessly, "do you like it?"

But even as he spoke he knew that she didn't. . . . His first novel, that he had written with Sybil's image constantly before him . . . something that was part of him—that he had borne for love of her . . . in pain and travail. . . .

Sybil's voice broke in onto his jumbled thoughts. It was cool and conventional.

"I think it shows a lot of promise," she said.

Just as if she were an editor. Promise—and he had thought it the fulfilment of his genius. . . . Promise. . . . in that matter-of-fact tone of voice.

"Of course," Sybil went on, "the idea of a boy like you trying to write an autobiographical novel is just simply silly! You haven't lived yet—how can you possibly write of life? I know you think you're very clever and I believe you are to a certain extent, but this"—here she indicated the precious manuscript—"this is frightfully puerile in parts!"

"It really is, Peter," she continued seriously, "and I'm only telling you because we're friends! No publisher on earth will take it! It's twice as sentimental as your fairy stories and not half so sincere! Really, Peter—you can do better. . . . I'm sure you can."

Again Peter recalled that morning when his parents read his first story. They had said that, too. Is that what people would always say of his work? Could he never do his best?

Peter of course did not accept Sybil's verdict. She was always laughing at him anyway. He would take it to Uncle Rufus. He did, and Uncle Rufus, peeved because Peter had neglected him for two months, said,

"Take the damn thing away—I don't want to read it."

He then took it to Kirkham, and waited in a fever of excitement, to hear his friend's opinion. Three days later Peter called to receive it.

"What's that?" said Kirkham absently, as he sat in his filthy studio, "your novel? Oh, by God, I forgot all about it. . . . I wonder where the hell it is. . . . It must be around here somewhere unless those damned kids have been fooling with it." Finally it was found under a pile of musty costumes on the model throne.

"I'll read it tonight," Kirkham promised.

He read fifteen pages and was extremely bored. Several days later he told Peter so. He was getting rather tired of Peter anyway.

### XIII

THREE publishers confirmed Sybil's verdict in rapid succession. He became morose and despondent, and he made the great mistake of trying to court Sybil while in this mood. He talked incessantly, telling her of the dramas he would write, and the future novels he planned. He told her of his early paternal yearnings. . . . He talked of his friends, of his work on the *Mail*, and, as a running accompaniment, of his love for her. He had already asked her to marry him, to which she had replied casually, "You shouldn't joke about such things."

"But I'm *not* joking," he assured her, plaintively.

"Well then you should be," she answered, with fine inconsistency.

Finally she lost patience with him. She had suffered him now for almost six months.

"Listen to me," she told him one day, "and if what I'm going to tell you smashes up our friendship—I'm sorry, but it can't be helped."

"You're a child and you haven't lived yet, and to ask me to be your wife, even though you do make a decent income is a piece of impertinence. I'm

only three years your senior, but I'm old enough to be your mother, actually, in experience! I've traveled in Europe for several years and had half a dozen men at my feet—do you think I'd marry you? Who are you? What have you done? Shall I tell you what you are? You're a sham—and you don't even deceive yourself! What do you know of love? What do you know of passion? Of tragedy? Of comedy, for that matter? Grow up, Peter, grow up—live a little! Travel a little! And in the meantime for heaven's sake leave me alone! I like you well enough, and you've been awfully sweet to Jane, but I wouldn't marry you if you were the last man on God's earth, and I doubt if any other woman would!"

An hour later his mother found him in the drawing-room, with a tear-stained face, in a condition not unlike the readily assumed trances of his childhood. He held both fists to his temples and his lips were tightly compressed. Mrs. Dunn ran to him at once.

"Peter, what is it?"

Peter shook his head from side to side, and tried to show his anguish by pantomime. Every phrase that came to his lips, no matter how true it might be, was carefully censored by him. Above all he wished to avoid the banal. What could he say to his mother? "My heart is broken?" He believed that this was the case, but he realized how foolish it sounded. "Life is no longer worth living?" This was also true, but he rejected it. He began to be irritated with his mother for her lack of perception and intuition.

Mrs. Dunn was worried. She had not seen Peter like this for years. She made tentative efforts to feel his forehead to see whether he was feverish. . . . Then she remembered having heard Sybil's voice.

"Have you had a tiff with Sybil?" she inquired. Mrs. Dunn always referred to the most violent altercations and quarrels as "tiffs" and by a similar species of euphemism there was no such word as seduction in her vocabulary. A

girl who was seduced "got into trouble," a man in the throes of tuberculosis "had trouble with his lungs" and a connection of hers who was a chronic subject to delirium tremens "suffered from alcohol poisoning." This extreme niceness of diction had always annoyed Peter, who, by contrast, affected a Rabelaisian coarseness.

Now, to have Sybil's heartrending home truths referred to as a "tiff" was the last straw.

He laughed hysterically, enjoying the anxiety his high-pitched mirth produced in his mother.

"Yes—yes," he said between unnatural chuckles—"I suppose you might call it that!"

He staggered out of the room and, having gone upstairs, threw himself face downward on the bed. . . . By rights he felt that his whole frame should be shaken by mighty, dry, hacking sobs. . . . But it wasn't. He was strangely still. Only his hands were moist, and, even through his thick boots and woollen socks, he could feel his feet sweat. . . .

## XIV

THAT night he contemplated suicide, or at least he fingered the edge of a razor with his thumb and thought how effective such an end would be and how badly Sybil would feel about it. . . . But it never got further than that—he was far too great a coward to take so rapid an exit.

Throughout the night Sybil's words rang through his ears: What do you know of life? Of love? Of passion? Of tragedy?"

What *did* he know of these? The insides of several brothels . . . the dregs and froth of one or two inconsequential amours. . . . The greatest grief that had ever stricken him was the death of a pet fox terrier when he was eleven. . . . The greatest joy had been the affection of a little girl to whom he told fairy stories. . . . The greatest thrill when he had received a two-guinea check for his first story. . . .

"Grow up—grow up, Peter! Live a little! Travel a little!"

Well, why not, thought Peter? He had several hundred pounds saved, and his father's tea business was flourishing. He began to pack at once. He wanted to get away immediately.

\* \* \*

The following morning he took breakfast with his father. Mr. Dunn, with a pile of letters in front of him, appeared very preoccupied and irritable.

His wife noticed his unusual concentration and enquired the reason.

"It's very annoying," said Mr. Dunn. "I fear I shall have to send someone to America about this warehouse business. Correspondence only seems to make matters more complicated. I really ought to go myself, but of course I can't leave the business!"

"Could I do the business, father?" Peter asked suddenly.

"You! I thought you would rather die than enter my business!"

"I don't want to enter the business," Peter explained, "but I'd like to go to America—and"—here the old, faintly patronizing smile broke through the heavy gloom in which he was clothed—"and as I'm not altogether devoid of intelligence, and have your interest at heart, I thought I could do it for you if you explained what was needed—and anyway it would save you money—and give me an interesting trip."

Mr. Dunn was stunned. He had long since given up hope that Peter would ever step into his shoes and he believed that he detected in this offer the first step toward a new relationship. . . . He licked his mustache nervously, trying to grasp the significance of the event.

Behind his drab and solemn exterior, Mr. Dunn was devoted to his son. He read every word that Peter ever wrote, and had been deeply hurt because he had never seen a copy of the ill-starred novel, the existence of which he had discovered at second hand.

"Suppose you come down with me

to the office," he suggested, "and talk it over?"

Peter was delighted. Here was a heaven sent chance to get away from things.

The upshot of it was that six weeks later, after feverish preparations, Peter sailed for America with five large trunks and eight pieces of hand baggage.

## XV

HE was very homesick and inasmuch as he considered this sentiment bourgeois, he despised himself for being a prey to it. He missed his father and mother far more than he had thought possible. On the first night of his stay in New York, he felt so lonely and miserable that he sat down and wrote them a long, affectionate letter. He carried it around with him for several days and later tore it up. It would never do to show that he was homesick.

His father's business was readily accomplished. It involved much signing of papers and a delay that kept him in New York for several weeks. Peter rather enjoyed the importance derived from his sudden plunge into commerce. It amused him to send home long coded cables reporting progress. He enjoyed the experience of being "paged" in the large lobby of the Waldorf Hotel, which he had chosen as his headquarters, and to receive telegrams and telephone messages from peripatetic bellhops. Peter, accustomed to the drowsy atmosphere of London clubs and hotels, marveled at the energy he saw all around him.

He met several business acquaintances of his father's to whom he had letters of introduction, and, while enjoying their hospitality he classified them as barbarians. . . . Men who wore white socks and picked their teeth in public. . . . People who asked, when he mentioned Swinburne and Beaude-  
laire, "Never heard of 'em—what line are they in?" Terrible. . . .

He thought incessantly of Sybil and her fascinating, volatile hands and the

thick braids of glossy black hair she plaited and wound round her head. . . . He wondered what she was thinking about his sudden trip to New York. Would she attribute his decision to her own rejection of his proposal? He wished now that he had not gone to the length of destroying her photograph and several little trinkets she had given him. . . . He had done it on the memorable evening of her refusal, thrusting the picture into the flames of his bedroom fire with the toe of his shoe . . . biting his lips, and moist eyed as the flames consumed it. . . . And there had been no one even there to watch. . . .

He wished he had her picture now, in the bare hotel bedroom, which chilled him each time he entered.

Most of all he missed Jane. Jane would have enjoyed New York. She enjoyed anything to excess, and New York seemed to carry everything to excess.

At the table next to him in the great dining-room of the hotel there was a cheerful, elderly, ruddy-complexioned man with two little girls of about eight or ten years of age. They chattered cheerfully to anyone within a convenient radius, and Peter looked forward to breakfast and lunch so that he could see them. They were pretty children, flaxen haired and blue eyed, and of a very friendly disposition. They had no table manners at all, in which they somewhat resembled Kirkham's children, but this was the only likeness. Their laughter was infectious and brightened the whole somber room.

At the cigar counter, Peter met their father. Peter was asking for a brand of English cigarettes and was annoyed when told they were not known. He mentioned several alternative brands but was equally unfortunate.

"Good Lord!" he said angrily, "haven't you any decent cigarettes at all?"

"Yeah," drawled the clerk, nettled at the Englishman's attitude, "we make quite a few ourselves," and he displayed a well-filled showcase.



The stranger introduced himself.

"You can get English cigarettes at a store on Broadway at Fortieth," he said. "I'm on my way uptown and I'll be very glad to take you along—it's only a few blocks.

Peter thanked him and they strolled uptown together.

"I'm quite in love with your little daughters," Peter ventured.

The man beamed with pleasure.

"Yes, sir," he said. "Yes, sir—they sure are fine youngsters—they sure are sweet kids—I picked 'em pretty well—didn't I?"

Peter smiled amiably at the witticism.

"Yes, sir," the stranger went on, "soon's I saw them I said to myself 'Those are my girls'—And I sure was right! They're a success! Some kids, I'll say!"

"They look very much like you," said Peter, feeling that some remark was called for.

The man roared with laughter.

"Like hell they do! Their parents are Swedes! They're not my actual children! I adopted them when they were babies! And take my tip," he went on less boisterously, "if ever you find yourself married and childless—you do the same! I was a disagreeable old man before we took those kids, and my wife was a soured, cranky old woman—but now—Gee! it's great to have a couple of youngsters to make a fuss over!"

They had now reached the store where Peter's cigarettes could be obtained and he parted from his new-found friend. But a seed had been sown in his mind that was destined to bear luxuriant—albeit bitter fruit.

## XVI

His father's business had long been transacted, but Peter still remained in New York. There was no need to hurry home. He received long letters from his mother which he answered by postcard. There was never any mention of Sybil, and since Peter would

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never ask specifically about her, there was never likely to be.

Mrs. Dunn could write longer letters containing less real news than any woman. She always forgot halfway through the letter for whom it was intended, and frequently she was engaged off and on for ten days on end in the composition of one letter. As Peter waded through page after page, hoping to find some mention of Sybil, he became more and more irritated by his mother. Her last letter was particularly exasperating. Apparently she had forgotten after the first page that the letter was intended for Peter, and was under the impression that she was writing to her sister Edith, with whom she was wont to exchange cooking recipes which neither of them ever used, but which they explained in the minutest detail.

Peter wrote home that he intended to stay in America for some time to come. He had sold some of his unpublished fairy stories to a newspaper syndicate, and was writing others for the same organization. He bought some stocks with some of his savings, more as a joke than as a serious investment, and also because it gratified him to think that he owned securities, and was entitled to walk into the customers' room of his broker's office and look at the ticker. . . . His investments were fortunate.

Peter was now past twenty-four and was putting on weight below the waist. He took no exercise at all and ate too much.

At night in search of sin he combed the tenderloin district, alone, and, though he knew nobody, with his hat pulled down over his face. . . . He found that vice was international. . . . There were times when he sat on rickety bedsteads in the lower forties and surveyed his surroundings with amused, dispassionate, coldly observant eye, when he could have sworn that he was in the room of one of Uncle Rufus' women, in Coventry Street. . . . Everything was exactly the same. . . . The same fly-blown windows, with dirty, torn, sadly flapping muslin curtains.

. . . The same cheap lithographs on the walls and threadbare carpet in a strip by the bed. . . . The same hideous china ornaments that propped yellowing photographs. . . . The same spilled ashes. . . . The same awful, forced conversation. . . . The same hideous mockery and tawdriness of it all. . . .

He blamed Sybil for it all.

Sometimes he went to Central Park, and was happy when children, with the utter lack of self-consciousness so conspicuous in American children as opposed to English, came up and spoke to him. . . .

He began to make it a regular habit to be there at certain hours, and many of the children came to know him and look forward to his coming. He brought them candy, teaching them to refer to it as "sweets" and sometimes he told them his fairy stories. Then he was happy. Then he felt as he had done at home in the presence of Jane—purified, and he regretted his nightly debaucheries in Longacre Square.

He was constantly turning over and over in his mind a thought engendered by the suggestion of the friendly stranger with the two little flaxen-haired girls. . . . To adopt a child—he would like that. A little girl like Jane, to smile up at him as if he were a god. He could well afford it. And he would like to show Sybil. . . . Ah, there was the rub—it always came back to Sybil.

In spite of his hypocrisies, Peter had a one-track mind. Sybil was the first girl with whom he had fallen in love, and he never considered the possibility that there might be others.

Sybil had considered him too young and inexperienced. That hurt. "What do you know of love? Of passion? Of tragedy?" he could hear her scornful voice now. . . . Well he had an idea. He would show her. . . .

In his letters to his mother, which now became more frequent, and more voluble, he began to make reference to a girl called Phoebe Dennis, and as the months went by, he warmed up to his subject, and confessed to his mother that he had fallen in love with Phoebe.

According to his letters, Phoebe was an orphan, and was a very frail, pretty little girl of nineteen, who spoke with a slow Southern drawl—Peter seemed to love writing about her, and his letters became more and more detailed and sentimental.

Mrs. Dunn was very happy about it. She showed the letters to everyone and told them that she confidently expected to hear at any moment of Peter's engagement.

Mr. Dunn, too, was pleased to read of his son's evident happiness, and enjoyed the wholesome tone of Peter's letters.

"Best thing in the world for him if he marries her," he said.

However, he felt it his duty to write Peter a long, loving letter, warning him not to be too hasty, and advising him to enquire carefully into Phoebe's parentage. Peter smiled as he read the letter, which reminded him very much of his youthful researches into *Facts A Young Married Woman Ought to Know* and allied treatises. But he was touched by its evident sincerity. He wrote a very cordial answer, expressing his appreciation of all that his father had ever done for him and Mr. Dunn was happier than he had been since Peter's childhood.

Peter also wrote to Uncle Rufus and informed him of his attachment for Phoebe, but received a typically cynical reply, written with a very shaky hand on the notepaper of a cheap and tawdry hotel in Brighton, where Peter had sometimes been with him. He advised his nephew succinctly to have as many liaisons as he liked in America, but urged him for God's sake not to marry, assuring him that it would cripple such talent as he possessed. The letter concluded with a request for a loan of fifty pounds, and as a postscript Uncle Rufus gave him the address of a disorderly house in Kansas City, which he had visited as a young man.

Now that he was away from the influence of Uncle Rufus, Peter could appreciate his utter rottenness. The man was rotten right to the core, dis-

loyal, diseased, disgusting. Peter remembered having dinner with Uncle Rufus a few nights before he came to America.

"I was in New York as a young man," he had said, "and I'd like to go back again for just one reason," here he began to laugh. "I was traveling on their Elevated railroad, you know, which runs on the level of the first floor—and someone had forgotten to pull their curtains—and I saw into a bathroom—he-he—" His mirth at the reminiscence rendered him inarticulate.

Peter laughed, too, at the time, and, during his first week in New York, had traveled rather extensively by Elevated, but he was never so fortunate as Uncle Rufus. . . .

To all his friends Peter wrote about Phoebe Dennis. And then on Christmas day fourteen months after his arrival in New York, he sprung his great announcement, in the form of a cable to his parents.

"Phoebe and I were married today. Will spend our honeymoon in Florida. Our united love. Peter."

Sybil, who was now teaching music, and who still lived next door and frequently visited Mrs. Dunn, was among the first to hear of it.

"Oh, I'm so glad!" she cried. "If there's one thing or person can make a man of Peter, it's an American wife! I've always heard that they don't stand any nonsense."

In the meantime, while carefully preparing the ground during all these months by means of his skilfully worded letters, Peter had not been idle.

His plans had all taken shape, and were working out beautifully.

In pursuance of the advice given him by the happy and successful foster father, he had determined to adopt a child.

The process of adoption is not so easy as it sounds, as Peter was soon to discover. In the first place, the institutions to which he applied had a very poor assortment of babies for adoption. And, secondly, they wanted

to know altogether too much about Peter's motives for adopting a child at all. Was he healthy? Rather limply Peter confessed that his health wasn't all that could be desired. Who would look after the child? Why—he supposed he would—at least—that is to say— He decided to attain his end through other channels. Institutions were too damned inquisitive anyway. How could he ever explain to a Board of Trustees or whoever it was presided over the destinies of orphans, that he wished to adopt a baby, because he had invented an entirely imaginative sweetheart, whom he was going to marry and later in due course kill off in childbirth, in order that he might pose effectively as a tragic young widower with a motherless child? For this, briefly, was his plan. He felt confident that, under such conditions, Sybil would no longer scorn him. What could be more tragic than the little situation he had planned? He congratulated himself upon having thought out so heartrending and yet simple a little scenario and busied himself happily with the details of its construction. Sybil had told him to grow up . . . to live . . . to travel. . . . Well, he was going to show Sybil . . . he was coming back in due course as a tragic widower. . . . Meanwhile he knew that he must hurry up and find the baby. . . . He was already married to Phoebe, according to his letters, and he had never anticipated the difficulty of obtaining an orphan.

He decided to go to Florida for a vacation. He had been writing a great deal and needed a rest. Besides his honeymoon letters had to be mailed from there. . . .

## XVII

PETER selected Miami, Florida, for his vacation and mythical honeymoon, and enjoyed himself lazing on the beach. He rewrote the novel Sybil had damned with such faint praise, and, as a relaxation, wrote home page after page of sentimental invention about his

happiness. Phoebe was so sweet. . . . So gentle. . . . Phoebe knelt by their bed each night and said her prayers just like a little girl. . . . Phoebe was adorable. . . . Though he wrote the letter with a grin, the jest cost him an effort. Phoebe was more than his invention—Phoebe was everything that Sybil might have been—and much more besides. He almost began to believe in Phoebe himself, for he poured such a passion of yearning and longing into his imaginary descriptions. . . . At night, when he had mailed yet another contribution to the Phoebe myth home to his delighted mother, he would sit by the window, and watch the sun sink over the sea, and he was sad. Even as he prepared this greatest pose as yet, he wondered if perhaps he were not making a colossal fool of himself. . . . Would it make any difference to Sybil? Could he carry it off. . . . The sun slipped down over the horizon in a blaze of glory and suddenly the room became chill and dreary. . . . Peter sat back in his chair and felt very homesick.

### XVIII

STAYING in the same boarding-house with Peter was Gertie Marx, and from the first, Peter studied her as he would some strange animal.

Gertie was coarse and vulgar, but you couldn't help admiring her for she was undeniably handsome. She had a loud, shrill voice, and red lustrous hair, and you heard the one and saw the other for a hundred yards.

Everybody called her Gertie and if you addressed her as Miss Marx, she was offended. She was very generous and impulsive, and altogether as unlike an English girl as Peter could imagine.

An endless succession of young men paid her court. Peter could never understand why. Her room was littered with candy and flowers brought by these admirers, and Gertie's loud and affectionate good-nights several times awakened Peter, whose room overlooked the porch, and when he looked at his watch he found it to be

around three o'clock in the morning. . .

Gertie didn't believe in formality. A few days after Peter's arrival, when, according to his ideas they were barely acquainted, she knocked on his bedroom door one morning and asked for the loan of a safety razor.

"A safety razor?" said Peter, honestly puzzled.

"Sure thing," said Gertie. "I gotta shave, too—under the arms—I'm going swimming!"

Peter, blushing profusely, gave her his razor, and hoped she would go, but she stood in the doorway, leaning against the framework, her hastily donned kimono disclosing a torn and much beribboned nightgown. She had not even troubled to put on her stockings, and as she talked casually to Peter of this and that, she dangled one of her bedroom slippers from her bare toes as she swung her foot cheerfully.

Peter was amazed at such lack of delicacy, and inquired of the other guests regarding Gertie's antecedents.

He heard that she was the daughter of an iron puddler in Pittsburgh who had suddenly inherited a fortune. Within six months it appeared the late Mr. Marx had drunk himself to death on it, and Gertie, his sole surviving relative, was now spending the balance.

Peter began to wish that he had followed his original intentions of going to one of the best hotels. He had chosen this boarding-house because he thought it would give him an opportunity of getting a little local color. . . . He felt he was getting a little too much. . . . Half-dressed women coming to his room to borrow safety razors. . . . As if there weren't enough depilatories advertised on every street car. . . .

"But is she—er—um—is she—all right?" he asked one of the guests.

"Depends what you mean by all right," was the answer.

A fat man who sat in a rocker in the porch interminably chewing gum grinned broadly.

"She's all right," he said loudly and



with evident amusement over some esoteric joke—"take my word for it!"

\* \* \*

SEVERAL weeks later a change came over the genial Gertie. She became depressed and her eyes looked as if she spent hours crying, which in fact she did. She didn't know what else to do.

To use Mrs. Dunn's nice phrase Gertie had got into trouble. And the author of the trouble, a nice young man with eyes that Gertie thought were the truest and bluest in Christendom, had hastily left for parts unknown.

Gertie told her story to Mrs. Lamkin the sceptical landlady, and Mrs. Lamkin spread the news. Everybody was very sorry for Gertie, but of course she had to go. She could not continue to live in a respectable boarding-house after such a thing.

Fortunately for Gertie, she had money. When her righteous anger against the nice young man with blue eyes had died down she dried her tears and took stock of herself.

She was thirty and very healthy. She had over ten thousand dollars left out of her father's windfall. Nothing to worry about there. It was a nuisance of course, that she was going to have a baby, but she could probably put it out to nurse and later send it to a home. All this she discussed very openly with anyone who cared to listen. Meanwhile she had received propositions of various natures from several of her other admirers.

Gertie packed her belongings, including Peter's razor, which she had never returned, and made an almost triumphant exodus from the boarding-house. . . . Everybody was very cordial and sympathetic with the exception of Peter. . . . She thought he gave her a very mean look. . . . To her great surprise he asked her very earnestly for her address when she wished him good-bye.

"I want to keep in touch with you," said Peter.

Greatly marveling, Gertie gave him her address.

## XIX

SEVERAL months later Peter paced up and down the waiting room of a maternity hospital in Palm Beach, nervously waiting to know the sex of the child he was going to adopt.

All the arrangements had been made and the papers drawn up. In consideration of the sum of one thousand dollars Gertie had very cheerfully consented to assign all rights to her unborn child. The arrangements suited her admirably. Personally she thought Peter was a fool, but he had money, and seemed to want the child, whereas she didn't.

Peter had rented a cottage, and hired a wonderful nurse with a string of credentials and everything was in readiness for the reception of the baby.

The waiting rooms of hospitals are thronged with memories and sadness, and about their immaculate corridors hangs the wraith of myriad hopes.

Peter sat at a little table and drummed on the top with his hands. Before him lay a telegraph form which he was preparing to send to England, where, at that moment, Mrs. Dunn was anxiously awaiting the news of Phoebe's successful confinement. Peter had carried his fairy story through consistently. Letters and cables he had composed by the score, building up the myth of Phoebe, his little wife—his dear little Phoebe.

Peter was excited and the ready tears welled in his eyes. . . . Damn it all—it was pathetic—even to kill off a dream wife. . . .

His thoughts were in a jumble. . . . Again he could hear the yelping voice of Mr. Groyne-Smith denouncing him for the damage to his door. . . . again he discussed theology with Kirkham. . . . again he sat up into the small hours grinding out the novel of which Sybil had been so contemptuous. . . . Well—she could never be contemptuous again. . . . he had grown up—he had lived—so it seemed to him, and so Sybil would think—

A soft-footed, gentle voice interrupted his reverie.

"It's a girl!" she announced, "both doing fine. . . ." Peter stopped to fill in a word on his telegraph form and then left hurriedly.

As he handed in the form at the cable office his hand trembled violently. The cable clerk read the message and shook his head from side to side. It was brief, and, in Peter's opinion, neatly worded.

"My beloved little Phoebe was taken from me in giving birth to Patricia at 10:23 this morning. Peter."

The cable clerk looked up at the sender, and extended his hand in silent sympathy. Peter grasped it, and began to sob noisily. . . .

He had an insane desire to add to the message the words, "No flowers by request," and to scream with laughter. . . . This being impossible, he sobbed all the more. . . .

If Peter could have seen the effect of his cable in England he would have been happy. In Sydenham, where the Dunns were very well known, a special service was held on the date which Peter announced as Phoebe's funeral. Everybody was aghast at the tragic termination of Peter's romance . . . groups of friends congregated in the Dunns' drawing-room, and Peter's letters were read and re-read. His parents were deeply shocked and grieved. Mrs. Dunn wanted to go to America immediately to be with Peter in his hour of trial, but fortunately for him, Mr. Dunn dissuaded her.

Sybil, too, was genuinely horror-stricken. She also remembered her parting adjuration to Peter—"What do you know of tragedy?" Poor, poor Peter. He had certainly lived in the past two years. . . . She wondered whether he were still as conceited as ever—poor Peter— She cried a little, thinking of him—

On the whole, Peter would have felt that his aim had been accomplished. . . . He was a tragic figure to everyone—not just a precocious young man who wrote fairy tales and talked too much. . . .

## XX

MEANWHILE, in his cottage in Palm Beach, Peter, as the months went by, was becoming acquainted with his foster-daughter.

Patricia was a lovely baby and never gave any trouble at all. . . . She was fat, healthy and cheerful—so much so that Peter was afraid that she would take too much after her mother. But his fears were groundless. She grew up later to be slim, dainty and lovely, and Peter, who had never yet had a sufficient outlet for the pent-up love of his intensely emotional nature, worshipped her. . . .

No father ever went through greater anguish or anxiety than did Peter when Patricia, in due course, had her childish ailments. . . . Each tooth that painfully pierced her baby gums made his heart bleed in sympathy. One thing Patricia had direct from her mother. She had a vast source of humor and a friendliness that embraced the whole world. She chuckled continually, even as a baby. By the hour Peter would sit enchanted, making faces for her just to hear her baby laughter. . . . He was very happy, and wrote reams of eulogy about Patricia to his mother, just as thousands of other sons have done the world over since time began. . . . This, however, never occurred to him. . . . Had it done so he might not have been so natural.

## XXI

WHEN Patricia was almost a year old, Peter, who had been giving one excuse after the other to explain the long delay, decided to stage the last act of his carefully prepared comedy.

He announced that he was coming home to settle down in England, and in a long and very beautiful letter to Sybil he expressed the hope that he would see her shortly.

Peter was now about twenty-six, and the hair was receding from his forehead over each temple. He was writing for the syndicate press now under half a

dozen *noms-de-plume* and derived a large income from his fairy stories and other features. His stock investments, too, had all been fortunate, and he found himself possessed of very ample means.

He was undeniably fat and flabby, because he took no exercise, but he looked prosperous and happy. This last, of course, was a mistake which he immediately set about to remedy. He must not look happy too soon after the tragedy which, according to his letters, had almost cost him his life. He studied a sad and wistful expression carefully before a mirror, and whenever he remembered to do so, he stopped smiling and assumed this mournful cloak. Patricia, finding him thus engaged one morning, bubbled with mirth. . . .

"Daddy make funny face!" she crowed. Peter picked her up and buried his head in the soft crease of her fat little neck, and held her to him tightly.

## XXII

LIKE a criminal seeking to evade the law, Peter cunningly covered up all his tracks before he sailed back home. He discharged the excellent nurse with the voluminous credentials, who knew of Patricia's origin, and engaged another, sending to Chicago for her. He made inquiries and found that Gertie was living in Louisville where she had married a gambling house proprietor. . . . He anticipated no trouble from Gertie. . . . The only other persons who knew of the adoption were an attorney who had drawn up the papers and the hospital authorities. And to them Peter was merely a rather eccentric Englishman, of apparently ample means, who had adopted an illegitimate child . . . they knew nothing of the fairy story he had told at home . . . they knew nothing of the mythical Phoebe. . . . It was none of their business, anyhow. The House Surgeon at the Maternity Hospital, a cynical young interne, younger than Peter, was secretly convinced that Patricia was Peter's own

child. But again it was none of his business. . . .

\* \* \*

Peter landed at Liverpool almost three years after he had first sailed, accompanied by two nurses and an avalanche of baggage. His legs were weak with excitement, and he was alternately minded to laugh and cry. . . .

His parents were at the dock to meet him. They were very little changed. Mrs. Dunn, if anything, a trifle more frail and more middle-aged, and Mr. Dunn perhaps more solemn and more nervous. The greeting between Peter and his parents was very affectionate. He hugged his father boyishly and kept on repeating in a high-pitched voice, "Well! Well! Well! You look fine! Well! Well! Well!"

There was a lump in his throat as he put Patricia, who was, as usual, bubbling with laughter, into his mother's thin arms.

"Oh, Peter!" said Mrs. Dunn, after kissing the baby rapturously, "she's so like you! Oh, my boy! My boy! I'm so happy."

Mr. Dunn put his arms around Peter's shoulders.

"Is she—is she very much like—like her dear mother?" he asked, and Peter, remembering his dream wife, answered, in a voice that choked with genuine emotion that she was the image of her dear mother. . . .

Presently they were in the boat train en route for London: Peter, his parents, Patricia and the two American nurses. Conversation was forced and gradually died down. Occasionally one of the nurses would point to some unusual feature of the landscape and the other would say, "Well, for goodness sake!" Patricia climbed over the seats and chattered happily, crooning a queer little song to herself. Finally she curled up on Peter's knee. . . . The stuffy compartment was vibrant with thoughts. It seemed to Peter that there was more than the mere thought of Phoebe present. . . . She seemed very tangible in the moment, the little dream wife he

had created out of his innermost heart and his most sacred thoughts—very tangible and very beautiful. . . . He watched the face of the peacefully sleeping child. A little smile hovered over her mouth, and she stirred in her sleep, stretching out baby hands as if to caress the face of a mother . . . who was alternately Phoebe and then Sybil. . . . Across the narrow compartment he met the eyes of his parents, sending him thoughts of love. . . . They too, he knew, were thinking of the Phoebe he had created. . . . He bent over carefully, so as not to disturb the sleeping child, and raised his mother's hand to his lips. . . . In that moment he was nearer to her than ever before or since. . . .

They arrived home late at night, and he was afraid at first that he would not see Sybil until the following morning. But she was there to greet them, tired out by waiting.

The moment for which Peter had planned for years had come. He was so nervous he could hardly control his voice or his movements. Presently he found himself shaking hands and saying once more in that same high-pitched voice he had used on the dock that morning, "Well! Well! Well!" and again, "Well! Well! Well!"

He tried to think of something else to say but his mind was a blank.

Sybil, too, was trembling with nervousness and Peter's continued high-pitched greetings jarred terribly.

"I'll just take one little peep at the baby," she announced abruptly, "and then leave you until tomorrow." A few minutes later she was gone. Mr. and Mrs. Dunn retired almost immediately. Patricia, in care of her two nurses, was already fast asleep. Peter was left alone with his thoughts.

He went up to his old room and strolled to the window. Here he had often sat as a child, looking toward the Crystal Palace, watching the fireworks display every Thursday and Saturday. As he watched now, a group of rockets burst overhead and for an instant his room was lit up brilliantly, and the hard

shadows leaped out onto the wall and then died down into the gloom. . . . From a vast distance, so it seemed, he heard the faint swelling, "Ah-h-h—" which came from the crowds in the Palace grounds, that curious mob-noise which only fireworks seem to elicit, a sound in which awe, admiration, naïveté and ridicule are perfectly blended. . . . It swelled and then died down . . . the fireworks were over. . . . In the silence Peter heard the gentle tap-tap of a twig of creeper as the breeze blew it against his window pane. . . . Slowly, thoughtfully he undressed and then, before turning in, he paddled in slippered feet along the hall to the room where Patricia slept, and kissed her good-night as she slept peacefully.

The following morning he saw Sybil again, and each found that the other had altered considerably. Sybil was now almost thirty, and was intensely interested in politics. Her face had grown thinner, and she wore rimless pince-nez which gave her an unwonted look of learning and asceticism. The mischievousness and banter had gone out of her eyes, and was replaced by a shrewd, appraising glance, that seemed to ask the person upon whom they were directed, "What *are* you, anyway? Are you worth while?"

But there were flashes of the old Sybil yet, and Peter, looking at her hungrily after three years of waiting and yearning, still found her eminently desirable. . . . The thin wraith of his little self-created dream wife Phoebe faded away before the actuality of Sybil. . . .

They were now more at ease with each other, and not under the emotional strain of the previous evening.

Peter had slept soundly and was feeling fresh and happy. He quite forgot to look wistful and depressed. He beamed upon Sybil and threw out his chest. . . . She was looking at him quizzically, her head on one side, an old and endearing trick of hers. . . . She saw the receding hair on his forehead, and the well-filled waistcoat. . . . Yes, Peter looked prosperous, and he



was no longer boyish. . . . But he most certainly didn't look tragic. . . . The death of Phoebe, thought Sybil, quite dispassionately, had not left any abiding lines of grief upon his smooth and healthy face. . . .

"D'you know, Peter," she told him at last, after a long smiling survey, "you've improved . . . you've filled out . . . you're quite mature. . . ."

Peter grinned at her, construing the phrase as a compliment.

"I *feel* mature," he answered her—"I've been through quite a lot and I've accomplished—well—not a little."

He edged toward a table, where, to Sybil's amusement, she saw a vast book of paper clippings. . . . The same old Peter, she thought.

"What are those—more fairy tales?"

"Yes—all sorts of things—they had quite a vogue over there you know."

As they were talking, Patricia was brought into the room by the nurse and Peter held out his arms for her.

Patricia rubbed her little head against Peter's chin happily. She was eminently a show baby, and went through all her little repertoire of cunning ways and tricks under the stimulus of Sybil's open admiration. She cheerfully consented to have her teeth exhibited, pulled Peter's nose until he snorted in actual pain, and was altogether charming and engaging. Peter enjoyed himself hugely showing her off to Sybil, and the latter was intensely amused at his ingenuous and genuine delight.

"Oh, Peter," she told him as she watched him toss his daughter up in the air, "I really think you're awfully sweet! But, honestly"—she began to laugh—"the idea of you being a father strikes me as frightfully funny somehow—I don't know why—but it does."

Instantly Peter was serious. Immediately he remembered his part. He carefully assumed the wistful expression he had so painstakingly practiced.

Sybil now had Patricia on her lap and was playing with her. Whenever

she looked up at Peter her face was wreathed in smiles and she did not appear to notice the hurt he strove to manifest with every feature over which he had muscular or emotional control.

### XXIII

IN the days that followed Sybil was almost constantly in the Dunns' home. Her own house being next door, she had formed the habit of visiting her neighbors at all hours, and a great friendship had sprung up between her and Mrs. Dunn, or rather as great a friendship of which that somewhat neutral woman was capable.

Peter, watching them, marveled that two such dissimilar natures could find anything in common. . . . It was only in later years that he found that, on the whole, there was nothing so dissimilar about them.

Patricia took to Sybil at once, which Peter considered a good omen. Of course she took to everybody with the same friendly promiscuity as a stray puppy, but he slurred over this intruding thought.

Peter was glad to be home, glad to be once more in England. To his surprise he found that he possessed more than a little of the patriotism he had once despised as being so banal and bourgeois. He had always posed as a violent pro-Boer, though utterly ignorant of the nature of this international dispute. It enabled him to be in the minority and he thrived in minorities. He even found it in his heart to understand the emotion of the much-quoted gentleman who had actually kissed his native soil. . . . He thought that under similar circumstances, and always provided there were an audience sufficiently large, he might be capable of a gesture so bizarre and impressive. He walked around the old familiar streets, thinking gaily, until he suddenly remembered his stricken condition. . . . Nearly always he wheeled Patricia's pram, and whenever he saw someone approaching to whom he was known, he fidgeted with the blankets, adjusted

the hood or was otherwise solicitous of her comfort. . . . Sometimes he overheard whispered comments, exquisite balm to his heart. . . . "Poor young Mr. Dunn . . . ! Isn't he just wonderful with the baby . . . ? How he worships her . . . ! What a sad thing . . . !" Then he was happy. . . .

Sybil's passionate interest in politics worried Peter. He had never been particularly interested in them himself, and in three years' absence from home had completely lost touch with English affairs. She insisted, however, on discussing politics with him and he found himself floundering in a sea of facts and figures of which he was absolutely ignorant, and, moreover, which bored him. . . . This made him uncomfortable, and although years of experience in dissimulation had taught him to conceal his ignorance of any topics with comparative ease, he felt sometimes as Sybil directed a shrewd glance at him that she was not deceived. It was one of Peter's characteristics that he would never admit that he knew nothing of a subject, or that he was wrong or misinformed. He would cheerfully contribute to a discussion on Chinese music if by so doing he could hide his ignorance, and a very extensive vocabulary, coupled with undoubted mental agility, often enabled him to couch his views in a form so verbose, yet nebulous and ambiguous, that they had effect of verisimilitude to the uninitiated.

Whenever Peter wanted to talk to Sybil about himself, she changed the conversation to domestic politics. Sybil was very intense about it and took herself almost as seriously as Peter. He loved to watch her argue. She would tick off the points on her hand with her beautiful, slender forefinger, and her eyes shone. When excited she had a fascinating little habit of wrinkling her nose, and Peter could almost always tell in advance when the nervous twitch would occur, and looked forward to it—in fact, he became so much absorbed in the physical Sybil that he often lost the thread of her argument.

## XXIV

THREE weeks after his return he asked her once more to be his wife. Sybil precipitated the proposal by asking quite naturally how he intended to bring up Patricia.

"She needs a mother, Peter," she told him, smiling, "and while I'm ready to admit that you're very versatile, you can't be a mother to her."

"No," said Peter, and then, simply, and not at all as he had rehearsed it a thousand times in his mind, "I want you to be."

She looked at him sharply, and then, seeing his nervous smile, her gaze softened.

"That's sweet of you, Peter, but of course you know as well as I do that it's quite, quite impossible."

"Why?" he demanded, and, though he was unaware of it, his voice rose to a shout.

"Because—because it wouldn't work—that's why! I do appreciate your asking me—but I don't see how you can—so soon after—after Phoebe's death!"

"You don't love me," she went on gently. "You are doing this out of kindness—because you think—I'm on the shelf! It wouldn't be fair—it wouldn't be fair to you—or to me—or to her." The low voice sank to a whisper at the last word.

Peter was dazed. . . . Sybil wouldn't marry him . . . the thing he had planned for years, and hatched so carefully, had addled—"It wouldn't be fair to *her*"—Phoebe—his fairy-tale dream wife, whom he had woven out of his loveliest and prettiest fancies, until she seemed at times a living entity, was coming between him and the woman he had loved for so long. . . . The fate of Frankenstein was overtaking him. . . . A monster, even a fragile figment of the brain, can destroy its creator. . . . Should he tell Sybil the truth? Tell her that for years he had planned and lived a lie, a gigantic, pathetic practical joke? No, he couldn't—he couldn't! He had chosen to be tragic and tragic he would remain—not

a pathetic joker whose bluff was called in the end. . . . And something else kept him silent . . . almost as if the fragrant, physical contact of a warm and well-loved hand were gently sealing his lips. . . . He had created a dream wife—so real to him at times that he felt the stinging truth of Sybil's words—"I don't see how you can—so soon after Phoebe's death!"

In silence, and with tear-dimmed eyes, he suffered Sybil to leave him.

In a daze he sank onto the couch and held his head in his hands. . . . A shadow passed the windows as the nurse strolled in the garden with Patricia. He heard the soft, wholesome crunch of the gravel under her feet and the swish of her stiffly starched linen skirts. . . . The sounds died away and from a distance Patricia's baby laughter. . . . He pulled himself together and stood at the window waving to her.

## XXV

PATRICIA was now seven and Peter well past thirty. He had bought a large cottage near Dorking, with thirty acres of land, and it amused him to play at being a country gentleman. . . .

He was prosperous and happy. His stories had now become quite widely known, and were praised for their whimsicality. Peter, proud of this adjective, constantly planned whimsical things to do. He lay awake at night turning over suggestions in his mind. . . . It would be rather quaint and pretty if, instead of having grown-up servants, he had an elderly housekeeper and three or four little orphans to do all the work. . . . He tried it, and kept it up for several months, and was immensely gratified when the account of it got into the papers.

He had bought one of the fairly new, and still erratic motor cars, and tinkered happily with its chronically deranged mechanism. These researches led him to get into touch once more with his old school friend Brockham, and he was a frequent guest of Brockham and his wife.

Patricia, already a long-legged and slender little sylph, was his constant companion. She was a very precocious child and he encouraged her to be so. It amused him to see the confusion of his guests under the embarrassing fusillade of questions she always asked. The little girl worshipped him, and he became her slave, devoting himself to her exclusively. He had a succession of competent nurses and governesses, but the position of these excellent people was not enviable. Peter could never even trust them to see that Patricia's evening bath was the right temperature. . . . He interfered in everything, and, as a result, Patricia was utterly undisciplined. . . .

He seldom saw Sybil again, and later she married a professor of political economy and went to live in Manchester. Peter tried to be duly depressed for days after the event, and sent them a very beautiful and far too long-winded letter, together with a whimsical present in the form of a combination dovecot, sundial and fountain, which they stored in the cellar. . . .

He invited his parents fairly regularly, driving in from Dorking whenever the car happened to be working. Mr. Dunn had retired from business now and devoted his time to the cultivation of sweet peas. Peter, who knew nothing whatever about sweet peas, offered prolific advice. Mrs. Dunn, who had always been middle-aged, seemed to grow no older. She was just as absent-minded as ever, and still exchanged cooking recipes with her Sister Edith by correspondence. Her "nervous headaches" were still just as bad, and Peter was just as intolerant of them as ever. . . .

Once he met Jane Phelps, now a very pretty girl of eighteen. The meeting embarrassed Peter, but left Jane unruffled. . . . He began by trying to patronize her, but she had learned how to counter this. . . . She had stepped into her sister's habit of smiling mockery. . . .

"Isn't it funny?" she said during this meeting, "I used to think you were the

most marvelous person and then you were only a boy—and now, when you *are* someone—I don't think you're at all marvelous!"

And then she criticized Patricia's upbringing very pointedly. Peter decided that he didn't like Jane at all. . . .

## XXVI

THE placid years went by, taking a little more hair from Peter's head and gently depositing a little more superfluous flesh below his waistcoat. . . .

It worried him very little, for he was perfectly content and happy. Patricia was now over seventeen and the world was at its height. . . .

The patriotism Peter had felt upon his return to England had largely evaporated. He was given to such transitory emotions. Patricia, however, was on half a dozen committees and in a constant fever of excitement, and to please her Peter simulated a very fair semblance of patriotic fervor. He was violently opposed by nature to conscription, as being an unwarranted infringement upon his God-given right to do as he pleased, but he somehow found himself making impassioned harangues in favor of it. He became a Special Constable, and pretended to be very upset when he was rejected for the army on account of heart trouble.

Patricia, to his great satisfaction, had inherited nothing from her mother but her good humor and her red hair. Whenever Peter looked at her fondly and proudly he offered up silent thanks that the nice young man with blue eyes who had casually been a party to her conception had obviously been a man of refinement.

Patricia was fine and dainty, like delicate china. She had long, slim legs, and a lissom, lyrical body, and she held herself like a queen. Her laughter rang through the house all day, as it had done when she was a child. In one respect she was bad for Peter—she thought everything he wrote or did was perfect, and he, quite contentedly, took her word for it, and became slip-

shod. . . . What matter, if Patricia found it good?

The devotion between them was very touching. Even now, when she was almost a woman, she would sit on his knee by the fire every night, her thin arms clasped round his neck, and beg him to tell her fairy stories, and, as he had done—years ago with Jane—he loved to watch the ripple of emotion that played over her expressive face. . . . He was an excellent teller of stories, with a great range of expression and often, as he spoke, he regretted that he had not become an actor—

Patricia was never tired of hearing about her mother and Peter had built up for her the vision of a dream mother so pure and good and sweet that she prayed each night to be made like her. . . . When Peter heard her he always had to fight hard to shut out the vision of Gertie.

And then Patricia fell in love. Peter had known, of course, that one day she would, but it had always been something remote and distant, and he dismissed the thought, as he tried to gloss over all unpleasant thoughts.

She fell in love with Second Lieutenant Arthur Herron, who had been billeted on them. . . .

Arthur was an amiable youth, and a typical product of a Public School and Oxford. He believed in God and in the Government, in being polite to old ladies and in the ultimate damnation of all Germans. He thought "the war was a bally nuisance, but somebody had to squash those swine or else they would have been imposs." He used countless abbreviations in his speech, wore very shiny field boots and equipment, slicked his hair back with pleasantly perfumed cosmetic and Patricia looked upon him as a young god.

He was very polite to Peter, who, suspecting in this a little of the deference due to age, was not appreciative.

In a very manly way he came to Peter one night and told him that he was in love with Patricia.

"In fact," he added naively, "we're both in love—and we've been kissing



each other for weeks—and I felt I ought to tell you.”

“A noble sentiment,” said Peter, with a facetiousness he did not feel—“Suppose we continue this very interesting conversation—after the war.” And Arthur had to leave it at that.

Peter watched Patricia and Arthur jealously in the days that followed, and a pain gnawed at his heart. . . . He was going to lose his daughter . . . it didn't seem possible. He had become absolutely wrapped up in her—was helpless without her. . . . She knew how he liked things . . . knew where things were kept. . . . More and more she had filled his thoughts and his heart. . . . She made him genuine. She was the inspiration of his best work. . . . Often he had wished to get into touch with the stranger in the Waldorf in New York whose two children were such a success, and tell him of the success of his own.

Patricia had eyes for no one but Arthur. The adoring gaze, upon which Peter had fed for years, was now directed at Arthur. . . . Peter found himself loathing the blameless young man who was stealing away his daughter. . . . Arthur was so young and supple and strong. . . . Peter had seen him once, stripped in the bathroom, and the virile muscles had rippled like waves under the healthy skin. . . . Peter, looking at himself, found himself flabby, fat, prematurely old, rapidly growing bald. . . . It had never worried him before. . . . In fact, an author noted for his whimsicality ought to be bald, Peter thought. . . .

One night, having retired early, leaving Patricia and Arthur alone in the pretty, unconventional chintz-decorated hall, Peter remembered a book which he had left downstairs and came back to fetch it.

His bedroom led from a quaint little gallery overlooking the hall. Peter peered over the banister before coming downstairs. His door had opened noiselessly and he had not been heard.

On a couch before the fire he saw Arthur with Patricia strained in his

arms, their lips together in a long, passionate kiss. . . . For an eternity, it seemed, he stood there . . . silent, watching. . . . Over and above the throbbing in his ears and through the mist that appeared before his eyes, he heard Patricia's sobbing little breaths, and the creak of Arthur's leather equipment. . . . Very plainly he heard Arthur's reverent whisper—or was it his imagination?—“Oh, I love you so—I love you—I love you—”

Without making a sound he went back into his room. As always, in excitement, his knees were weak, and his hands and forehead damp with sweat—

Seated in an armchair by the window, he gave himself up to the torture of his twisted thoughts—

At midnight a gentle tap on the door announced Patricia. Ever since childhood she had come to her father whenever she felt that she needed him—at all hours. She needed him now—so that she might share with him the exquisite rapture of her first love. . . .

She was in a thin wrap that covered her silk nightdress. Her lovely young throat was bare. . . . She came and perched herself, as always, on the arm of Peter's chair, from which she always slid down onto his lap with a childish enjoyment of the resultant thump that years had not dimmed—

Her slim legs were bare and she dangled a pale blue mule from one foot. . . . Peter was carried back eighteen years. . . . Just so had Gertie dangled a bedroom slipper in the doorway of his room in Florida. . . .

She put her slim young arms about Peter's neck and pressed his head to a warm, soft breast . . . under the thin silk wrap he could hear her heart beating.

“I'm so happy, Daddy!” she whispered, and lifted his face to kiss it. . . .

He held her to him fiercely, crushing her lips to his, and as he did so the blood rushed to his head and the sudden realization came over him that he was indeed the most colossal fool. . . .

In the throbbing sweetness of that long kiss he knew that he loved Patricia

—who thought she was his daughter. . . .

She was snuggling up to him now, as she had done since she was a baby, fondling his face and stroking his head. Once, in the course of invention, he had told her that Phoebe had invariably stroked his head, and as she did so now she murmured, "Is that how mummy did it?"

Peter was in an agony. His whole body yearned for Patricia, so near and so alluring—and it was only by the exercise of tremendous self-control that he was able to refrain from kissing her again. . . . He sat still, every muscle taut and rigid, fighting his battle . . . condemning himself unsparingly—What a fool he was—what a fool! His vast and cosmic jest had failed to work with Sybil and now it had recoiled upon him. . . . He was in love with his adopted daughter, who believed, together with all the world, that she was the child of his idyllic union with Phoebe. . . . Myths, monstrous myths, that now came to haunt him. . . .

Presently Patricia uncurled herself gracefully, like a kitten, and slipped gently from the room, but Peter sat for hours as if in a dream, and his face was drawn and lined. . . .

Three days later Patricia had a lovers' quarrel with Arthur, and came to him in a passion of tears. As she clung to him she kept on saying:

"Oh, Daddy—he's such a brute—and I love you *heaps* better!"

She made it up with Arthur several days later, but it gave Peter food for much thought. . . . If he told her the truth—could she perhaps learn to love him? But could he himself face the truth? Face the storm of ridicule and laughter which the publication of the truth would entail?

Meanwhile during the continuation of her quarrel with Arthur, Peter had her almost entirely to himself, and, when he could forget sufficiently, was almost happy. . . .

The following day he took her to London to a matinee and started off in the best of spirits. Just as they were

about to enter a tea shop, however, he very abruptly changed his mind, and, bustling Patricia into the car rather breathlessly, he ordered the chauffeur home. Patricia was quite worried and inquired if he were ill. He ignored the question, but throughout the ride home he seemed very nervous and irritable. . . .

He had excellent reason to be nervous. As he entered the tea shop he had seen the last person on earth whom he ever wanted to see—Gertie. That was bad enough. Still worse, however, was the fact that Gertie had seen him. He wondered, uneasily, what she would do. . . . He knew very little of Gertie, but what he did know had not impressed him very favorably.

The years had been unkind to Gertie. After the death of her husband in Louisville, she had led a somewhat checkered career. She was well, or rather notoriously, well known in Mexico City, and she carefully avoided New Orleans. . . .

She was now about forty-five, and though Fate had dealt her many a nasty blow, she was still the same noisy, boisterous Gertie. Cosmetics, liberally applied, replaced the former healthy coloring of the deceased iron puddler's daughter from Pittsburgh, and she was a very much wiser, shrewder, more wicked woman than when she had fallen a victim to the allurements of the nice young man with blue eyes. . . .

She had been in London now for six weeks, having arrived in company with an Argentinian merchant who had become enamoured of her brazen charms in a Buenos Aires café. . . . Now the gentleman from the Argentine had departed, leaving no address.

At this opportune moment she came across Peter. She recognized him instantly, and could see by Peter's hasty movements that the recognition was mutual, and, moreover, not welcome.

Gertie began to make inquiries. In sentimental moments she had often wondered about her baby, and sometimes she went into a Catholic Church and muttered a few prayers for her. . . .

She soon found that Peter Adolph Dunn was by now a recognized author of considerable means, and that he lived in Dorking with his daughter. A man of considerable means . . . that sounded good to Gertie, who was down to her last few pounds. She began to frame a plaintive, heartrending hard-luck story for his benefit as she took the first train to Dorking.

She never had occasion to use it. It so happened that she traveled down in the same compartment with Miss Willis, a neighbor of Peter's. Gertie, her old-time camaraderie ever uppermost, had soon melted the frosty reserve of Miss Willis, and, having learned that she, too, was bound for Dorking, the rest soon followed. Gradually, with a hard little smile, Gertie heard of Phoebe, "poor Mr. Dunn's little American wife who died in childbirth." She had no idea why Peter should have invented such a story, but one thing was very obvious . . . he would most certainly not wish the truth to be known. Experience in such matters had taught Gertie that in such a situation lay the nucleus of an easily acquired bank-roll. . . .

That afternoon Peter, sitting alone in the apple orchard, saw Gertie coming up the path to the house and wished that the earth could swallow her. . . .

Their greeting was brief in the extreme, and almost immediately Gertie introduced the burning topic.

"What's the big idea?" she asked in a low voice, "of passing off my daughter as yours—eh? Why all this gab about a phoney wife, named Feeble or somep'n?"

"Ssh!! For God's sake, be quiet!" Peter implored her. Gertie got down to business without delay.

"Sweetie," she said, with a sly laugh, "keeping quiet's what I don't do nothing else but—*provided, always provided*, that there's something in it for Gertie!"

"Come into my study," said Peter hurriedly—"I'll talk to you there."

Half an hour later Gertie left with a check for two hundred pounds, while Peter cursed himself for being a fool. Gertie had promised to return to Amer-

ica, but the promise was a waste of breath. Gertie never meant to return, and Peter knew it. . . . When she came again he was ready with a check.

## XXVII

GERTIE'S visits were becoming more and more frequent, and Peter was desperate. With perfect confidence she came at all times and stayed as long as she liked. Patricia hated her.

"Daddy, I hate her! I wish you wouldn't have her down here—" she told him.

Poor Peter was helpless, and in a constant state of terror lest Gertie should reveal the truth—

"Who is she, Daddy?" Patricia demanded. His voice shook as he had to answer casually:

"An old acquaintance from America, darling—I have to be polite to her."

And then the question he dreaded.

"Did she know mother, Daddy?"

"Yes, dear."

"Then I'll try to like her," Patricia promised him.

\* \* \*

Gertie was lonely. She was no longer young, and though she was now liberally supplied with money, the pleasures of London palled upon her. She began to look forward to her frequent visits to Dorking, not only because they netted her a check, but because there was something so peaceful about the little village. . . .

When Patricia, true to her promise, tried to be nice to her, she came more frequently and stayed longer. Once she even came and refused a check when Peter offered it to her. . . .

"I got some left from last time," she said. "Buy the kid something with it."

Once she came when Peter's parents were visiting him, and he had to introduce her to them. He had already been compelled to introduce her to the neighbors and friends she met at his house.

In those months Gertie studied Peter closely. She still thought him a fool, but she had to admit he was a lovable

fool— He had been wonderfully good to Patricia—her baby— She could see how he adored her and watched her every movement proudly and lovingly. . . . Also now that he was fairly confident that she would never betray his secret, he was courteous to her, and sometimes even jocular. . . . After all, thought Peter, she was a poor devil . . . why not be kind to her. . . .

Gertie was tired of taking blackmail. She wanted to settle down.

When she told Peter that she thought of taking a cottage in Dorking he was indignant.

"You can't!" he stormed.

"Who says I can't? I can do anything I damn please—get me?" Her voice was harsh and rasping.

Then, as she saw him tremble, she became quiet.

"Say, listen—why should you and I quarrel?" she inquired.

"I'm sure I don't want to."

"Nor I. Fact is—I'm getting quite fond of you—and this house—and everything. I want to settle down and have a home—like this—I've never had one—never! I've bummed around all my life—drifting—God knows where. I'm tired of it all—I want peace—comfort. I don't want to live by blackmail any longer. . . . I want to live decently."

She surveyed Peter with a calculating eye, wondering what was passing through his mind.

"You'll be alone soon," she went on. "Patricia'll leave you. She's cuckoo about this Arthur boy—nice kid, too! You'll need a woman round the house—I'm useful—I'm your age—why not marry me?"

"Talk sense," said Peter. "I'll give you all the money you want to keep your mouth shut, because it would break my heart if Patricia should ever learn the truth—but what you suggest is ridiculous."

Two figures could be seen coming up the path—Patricia and Arthur, arm in arm. In two minutes they would be in

the hall—Gertie had to think and talk quickly.

"It may be ridiculous," she said, "but you're going through with it! You've just told me that your life has been one pose—go through with it!" She pointed to where Patricia and Arthur were walking, almost within earshot. Her voice sank to a whisper.

"If you don't tell her when she comes in that you and I are going to get married—then good-night! I'll tell her I'm her mother! I swear to God I will—and the world will have one long laugh at you—you poor sap!"

Peter could hear Patricia scraping her feet on the stone stairs. . . .

"You've told the world that you're her father—now, you do your stuff or I'll tell her the truth!"

The hall door was flung open, and Patricia stood there, radiant with youth and love, her copper-red hair a blazing glory against the setting sun. Peter moistened his lips, and filled his eyes with her loveliness— So young, so fresh, so desirable— He looked to where Gertie stood in the shadows, a tawdry, coarse woman, run to seed. . . . Patricia's mother. . . .

He pulled himself together. Gertie was right—his whole life had been a pose—he would see it through. . . . Nervously he cleared his throat and held out a hand to Gertie. For a moment, reading the anguish in his eyes, she was tempted to draw back. . . . The moment passed. . . . She was getting old and lonely. . . . She wanted a house of her own—she wanted to settle down—she took the hand outstretched to her, and together the couple faced the lovers on the porch.

Peter avoided Patricia's eye. . . .

"My dear!" he said, in a nervous, throaty voice, "I want you to be the first to congratulate me and your"—his voice broke here, but he covered it with a cough—"your new mother."

Even as his heart was breaking he could not help thinking that it was neatly phrased. . . .

*(The End)*



# Répétition Générale

By George Jean Nathan and H. L. Mencken

## § 1

*The Monthly Award.*—After mature deliberation and in the face of uncommonly severe competition, *Répétition Générale* this month takes pleasure in awarding its elegant  $3\frac{1}{2}$  by  $4\frac{3}{4}$  custard pie to Mr. A. Russel Erskine, president of the Studebaker Corporation, for his "Creed," subtitled "The Will To Do," published in the Detroit *Motor News* of recent date. Follows Mr. Erskine's statement of faith, published underneath a large photograph of himself:

I am an irresistible force—confident, resourceful, self-reliant, and determined to accomplish my purpose.

I recognize no obstacle, countenance no defeat, and defy anything to break my will.

I am a seeker after truth, and a discoverer of facts. I build my happiness and success upon my desire and will to attain them.

While some things seem impossible, I achieve impossible things.

I am a Studebaker man.

(signed) A. R. Erskine.

## § 2

*Victims of Art.*—Barney Google, it appears, is a purely imaginary name; I can find no Irishman named Google in the New York telephone directory. But there are plenty of Potashes and Perlmutters. Once again the Irish are luckier than the Jews. Do the authors of songs and tales, when they choose names for their heroes and clowns, ever think of the probable damage to real human beings, made in the image of God? When I was a boy, every Irishman named McGinty labored under a handicap worse than a hare-lip or a cocked eye; if his given name was Daniel he was as good as damned. It was worse,

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in those days, to be named Dan McGinty than to be named Benedict Arnold or Charles Guiteau. To be named Annie Rooney was almost as bad. "Little Annie Rooney is my sweetheart!"—this banal refrain made all the young Irish Lotharios shy. I knew at least one Annie Rooney who, in despair of ever getting a husband above the ox, went into a convent, and so robbed some extra-heroic Gael of a charming and excellent wife.

Dickens, the greatest of all creators of unforgettable archetypes, was usually careful to give them impossible, though not improbable names. Pecksniff, Micawber, Chadband, Squeers—all such patronymics show a great philological speciousness, but have never been borne, so far as I know, by real men. So with Harum. But Sherlock Holmes must have been common before Dr. Doyle used it for his detective—and a great curse to all its actual bearers thereafter. When Sinclair Lewis called his go-getter George F. Babbitt he not only created a generic name for the normal American business man; he also brought down woe upon a great host of real Babbitts, some of them anything but Lewisian Babbitts. It is impossible to avoid the suspicion that he chose the name deliberately, and with a machiavellian malice. In fact, I have heard at least three stories accounting for it. The most probable revolves around the fact that there was a bootlegger in New York, three years ago, named George F. Babbitt, who came to grief by selling gin sophisticated with the lower alcohols. Two well-known American poets came down with fearful cramps after drinking his pseudo-

Gordon. It is not impossible that a novelist or two was bitten by the same snake. Professional sympathy for his stricken brethren—this would sufficiently account for Lewis' foul *attentat* upon the name. He has ruined it for a generation. Until "Babbitt" is forgotten, there will be no peace in the Republic for the real Babbitts.

### § 3

*The Acorn and the Prune Tree.*—I unearthed it in a little second-hand book shop down in Astor Place. It is a resplendent book published by Funk and Wagnalls in 1883; its piquant title is "Traps For the Young"; and its author is no less a celebrity than that immortal sin steam-roller, the late Mons. Anthony Comstock, in his time secretary and chief special agent of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice. This book, in the language of the Society for the Preservation of the Purity of the English Language, is a cuckoo. And it affords, after the lapse of these forty years, a not altogether unhumorous picture of the genesis of the anti-vice wave that currently sweeps across the American scene and of the nature of the droll little acorns from which the present towering prune trees have flourished.

The frontispiece to the book is in the tasty early Al Woods manner, bears the legend "The Modern News Stand and Its Results," and is divided into five sections. In the centre, we behold a number of youngsters gathered around a street newsstand. The dire consequences of this act are pictured to the right and left. One cut shows one of the tots holding up an adult pedestrian with a revolver and shouting, "Your money or your life!" Another shows several of the kids smoking pipes and segars. A third depicts a little boy about to stab another little boy. And the fourth shows a couple of the bairns enjoying themselves by setting fire to a house. All this is, you will observe, a direct result of having stood in front of a street newsstand.

But let us proceed to the octavo itself. It appears from the table of contents that life in those days was—and by implication is still—just one darn trap after another. I quote them: Chapter I. Household Traps; Chapter II. More Household Traps and Newspaper Traps; Chapter III. Novel and Story Paper Traps; Chapter IV. Advertisement Traps; Chapter V. Gambling Traps; Chapter VI. Poke-a-moke or Policy Traps; Chapter VII. Pool Traps; Chapter VIII. Death-traps by Mail; Chapter IX. Quack Traps; Chapter X. Free Love Traps; Chapter XI. Artistic and Classical Traps; Chapter XII. Infidel Traps, Liberal Traps, etc.; Chapter XIII. More Liberal Traps; Chapter XIV. Appendix of General Traps. All these traps, like the bed-time stories of today, it develops, were for little boys and girls. "After more than eleven years experience contending for the moral purity of the children of the land," begins the solicitous author, "I have one clear conviction, *viz.*: (the book is chock full of *vizes*) that *Satan lays the snare, and children are his victims*. There is a great variety of traps used by mankind. For instance, the fox trap, the box trap, the rabbit trap, the squirrel trap, the partridge trap, the bear trap, the mink trap, the rat trap and the mouse trap. Satan adopts similar devices to capture our youth!"

Satan's murderous traps for the unwary American child are then attacked head on by the good Comstock. It would seem that the love story is one of the doggonedest of all Satan's traps for the little ones. "It captivates fancy and perverts the taste of the child," says Comstock. "It defrauds the future man and woman by enslaving the young imagination. Even in the sanctuary during the solemn hours of worship on the Sabbath day, it makes the day-dreamer wander away in thought." Born at about the time Mr. Comstock's book was published, I can verify his asseverations by confessing that my own long criminal record was directly due

to my having read as a small boy the love stories of Jane Austen.

Turning to page 11 of the book, I encounter this lovely schnitz'l of literary criticism: "In novel reading, the tendency is from the higher to the lower rather than from the lower to the higher . . . . Some have questioned whether persons reading such authors as Mrs. Southworth and Alexander Dumas advance in time to George Eliot and Sir Walter Scott." I am guilty of the italics.

"Light literature, then," concludes St. Anthony, "is a devil-trap to captivate the child . . . . and rob the future ages of the high order of men and women." As samples of particularly dangerous stories he specifies those in which (1) beautiful girls seek to captivate men they love, (2) in which beautiful girls are forced to marry scoundrels to save their benefactors, (3) in which women die in New York and come to life in Italy, (4) in which Indians commit massacres, (5) in which babes are stolen and substituted for other babes (e.g., the vicious and demoralizing "Pinafore"), (6) in which heartless wretches marry young ladies of "princely beauty," (7) in which heartless wretches marry haughty rich young women; and (8) in which "men on the way from their second wedding ceremonies pass their first wives who fall dead lisping their names," and in which—I quote from Prof. Comstock's book—"the heartless villain is then led to his new and elegant home and is made to say: 'Not within sight of my window could I bear the narrow mound; not within sound of the voice of my haughty titled bride should she lie. So I carried her away . . . . still in her bridal gown of white, to rest forever!'"

Such stories, proclaims the author, "do more to debase the young than an endowed chair in every college in the land will or can do to ennoble them!" "Only recently," then indignantly climaxes Dr. Comstock, "I purchased a book the web of whose story consisted

or . . . . a street fight, wine drinking, *smoking cigars*, et cetera!" Such vile fables, he states, "destroy domestic peace, desolate homes, and make foul-mouthed bullies, cheats, vagabonds, thieves, desperadoes, and libertines!"

As a result of reading stories of this kind, Mr. Comstock points to three specific cases:

"Last April" (he writes) "a lad fifteen years of age was arrested after three attempts to wreck a train just beyond Saratoga. Pleasant thought for the traveler, that we are safe from the armed brigands of Italy and the outlaws of the plains, but in imminent danger from schoolboys crazed by the accursed story papers!"

"A short time ago"—this is Case 2—"a lad ran away from home. He had played truant from school, and had been punished by his parent. This was too much for him. No boy in a ten-cent story would stand that! He joined a band of youthful robbers who had a rendezvous in an old unoccupied house. He was initiated at night, with ceremonies and a solemn oath to secrecy, *after which a banquet was served!*"

Another lad perhaps not more than seven years old—this is Exhibit C, and a heart-rending one, as you will presently perceive—read stories and also ran away from home. This is what Mr. Comstock says happened to him as a result of reading stories. I quote literally: "He went to New Orleans, there had an attack of fever, and came very near dying among strangers. After that he went to Galveston, where he broke his arm. Then he stole a ride to Houston on a freight train, and there was pushed off the train, breaking two ribs. After recovering he was wounded by a pistol shot, and then got into a fight and was beaten almost to death. After this, to get a living he had to sell papers, black boots, work in a livery stable, cut heavy timbers, and herd cattle on the plains in the far West."

Some kid!

There are at least a dozen other sim-

ilarly harrowing and piteous stories that show with equal force, clarity and conviction the pernicious influence of literature upon the young.

Turning to lotteries—one of the most iniquitous of Satan's traps for our babes—Mr. Comstock says, "Tickets are placed on sale in some of the lowest dens in our large cities. In these places I have repeatedly seen children standing with trembling forms waiting their turn."

Trap for tots, No. 602 G: "Certain manufacturers of cigarettes, in order to fix more forcibly a taste and habit and fasten upon the youthful smoker the uncontrollable practice of smoking, *put opium in their cigarettes*. It seems as if Satan hems in our youth in all directions."

"In stories about detectives," proceeds the author, sounding a warning against such cigarette propaganda literature, "you will find at all conferences choicest wines and liquors are brought out, while they lay back in their chairs, feet upon the mantel (Editorial Note: India rubber detectives evidently) or table, while the blue smoke curls above their heads as it is puffed out of their mouths in fantastic forms. *These are not imaginary evils!*"

Trap for bambinos, No. 603 H: "But lest children shall be let off too easy, and to block up more effectually every avenue of escape, we have another devil-trap for even the little wee ones. These traps may be discovered in confectionery stores which keep open on Sunday. Any person who has observed these matters must have been struck with the numbers of little ones who throng into candy stores *before* and *while going* to Sunday-school. It is when their faces are turned away from home and its hallowed influences, toward the sacred precincts of God's house to be trained up in wisdom and grace, that the Evil One overtakes them and makes a bid for them. Tempted by the delicious flavors so sweet to the taste, dishonesty is encouraged and swiftly follows."

Most dastardly of all Satan's traps for the papooses, No. 604 K, it appears, is billiard pool. "Pool," writes Mr. Comstock, who apparently was not an observant pool player, "is a game played on a billiard table." "Children become so infatuated with it," he says, "that speedy ruin overtakes them."

As an unanswerable argument against all pool playing, Mr. Comstock writes that on September 22, 1882, Charles H. Warren shot Patrick Dwyer over a game of pool in a saloon at No. 108 Bowery. It will be seen from this, he concludes, that "pool gambling is only another subtle scheme of Satan to ensnare our youth."

And yet there were some folks in those days who read the books of Petroleum V. Nasby and Bill Nye!

#### § 4

*Vox Populi, Vox Dei, IV.* — The voice of the Lord God Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, as reflected by the legal voice of the people of the United States, severally by states and municipalities and collectively by the union:

58. God is of the belief that if a man shines shoes or sells flowers on Sunday in Alliance, Ohio, he should be fined, and that if he does it a second time he should be sent to jail for thirty days.

59. God is against the delivery of ice on Sunday in Omaha, Neb.

60. God believes that if a man or woman writes a poem (for paid publication in a magazine) on Sunday in Utah, he or she should be arrested.

61. God believes that it is wrong to drive an automobile on Sunday in Ocean Grove, New Jersey.

62. God believes that music should not be played on Sunday in Berkeley, Cal.

63. God believes that it is all wrong to sell a bottle of ketchup on Sunday in the Bronx.

64. God believes that all persons in Tangier, Va., who do not go to church should be compelled by ordinance to



stay indoors during the period of church services and under no circumstances be permitted to go out.

65. God is against buying, selling, or smoking a cigarette in Kansas.

66. God believes that no Nebraska girl should be permitted to wear a short skirt.

67. God believes it is wrong to tip a servant in Iowa.

68. God holds it illegal to teach the doctrine of evolution in Texas.

69. God is against anyone playing pool or billiards in South Carolina.

70. God believes that children should not be allowed to attend private schools in Oregon.

71. God says that one must not whistle on Sunday in Massachusetts.

72. God doesn't believe in shaving on Sunday in Arizona.

## § 5

*The Crime of Jan. 1, 1863.* — The present parlous condition of the late Confederate States, with the native blackamoors emigrating to the rolling-mills, illicit distilleries and jazz-palaces of the North by the hundred thousand, will probably give some pause to the surviving proponents of the old doctrine that chattel slavery was economically unsound. Was it, indeed! Then try to imagine Georgia, under chattel slavery, getting into the appalling economic condition that it labors under to-day. One of the leading bankers of the state is authority for the estimate that the departure of field-hands will cost its cotton growers \$20,000,000 this year. Certainly they never suffered any such staggering loss under slavery. The slave may have been an indifferent workman, but he at least did some work.

The truth is that the plan of remedying the acknowledged evils of slavery by abolishing it altogether was as extravagant and imprudent as the plan of cutting off a man's head to cure his headache. As a matter of historical fact, it was not adopted with any such nonsensical intention; it was adopted

simply as a device for harassing and punishing the Confederates. Unluckily, it set a precedent which still harasses and punishes all of us. The seeds of Prohibition were in Lincoln's highly disingenuous proclamation of January 1, 1863—one of the most hypocritical documents, without a doubt, in all American history, for though it abolished slavery in those parts of the South that were still in rebellion, it specifically permitted slavery to go on in those parts that had come under the Yankee hoof. It was not, indeed, until the late Woodrow mounted the throne that any comparable imposture was flung at "the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God."

If, as was widely held at the time, chattel slavery was full of defects, then the obvious remedy was to search them out and remove them. Most of them had been detected and cured nearly 1,500 years before by the Romans of the Empire—for example, the custom which allowed a slave-owner to separate a slave family. A few simple reforms of that sort, most of which would have been supported by the overwhelming majority of Southerners, and the slaves would have ceased to fret under their bondage. As everyone knows, the complete freedom that was so suddenly thrust upon them demoralized them almost unanimously, and brought upon them a host of woes. Before ten years had come and gone, the white Southerners, in self-defence, had to take their liberty away from them again by extra legal devices—this setting another evil precedent. In most parts of rural Georgia today the black field-hand is almost as much a slave in fact as his grandfather was on December 31, 1862. He is not permitted to exercise any of the common rights of citizenship, he is deprived of equality before the law by being denied a trial by his peers, and now the alarmed cotton-growers are even trying to take away from him his right to free movement. The only right that remains to him is the right to acquire

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simply as a device for harassing and punishing the Confederates. Unluckily, it set a precedent which still harasses and punishes all of us. The seeds of Prohibition were in Lincoln's highly disingenuous proclamation of January 1, 1863—one of the most hypocritical documents, without a doubt, in all American history, for though it abolished slavery in those parts of the South that were still in rebellion, it specifically permitted slavery to go on in those parts that had come under the Yankee hoof. It was not, indeed, until the late Woodrow mounted the throne that any comparable imposture was flung at "the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God."

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and hold property. This right was enjoyed by all slaves under the Roman Empire; many of them grew far richer than any Southern Aframerican is to-day. In addition these Roman slaves got honest justice in the courts, and many of them were permitted to travel. The free Aframerican is thus worse off than they were. More important still, his vain efforts to obtain his theoretical rights have caused him to be disliked intensely; the Roman slave was very popular, and often rose to positions of public eminence.

The prejudice against slavery is but one more proof of the power that mere words have over the minds of men. Slavery has a bad name, and so it is hated; freedom has a good name, and so it is revered. But the fact is, of course, that most of the men living in the world today are actually slaves, however firmly convinced they may be that they are free. "An ordinary Englishman of our time," said Clive Bell a short while ago, "is, on the whole, less free than a Roman slave of the time of Hadrian." Yet compared to an ordinary American, and particularly to an ordinary Southern American, this ordinary Englishman is as free as an eagle in the air. He may profess any political belief he pleases, and vote for any candidate who appeals to him. He has absolutely complete religious freedom; he may become a Mormon or a Moslem without running the slightest danger. He is sure of a fair trial when he falls into the hands of the police, no matter what his crime. He may marry any woman he fancies. He may drink anything he likes. His property cannot be taken away from him save by a formal legal process, applicable to all other Englishmen equitably.

The Southern American, having renounced slavery, is still so far a slave himself that he enjoys none of these boons. He cannot vote for any political candidate he happens to admire; he must always vote for a Democrat, which is to say, a professional rogue; if he voted for a communist, say, or

even a Socialist, he would return home to find his house afire and his wife and children fled to the swamps. His religious freedom is entirely imaginary; he must be some sort of Methodist or Baptist or pay a heavy penalty; if he says that he is a Catholic, a Jew, a Moslem, a Mormon or an agnostic he simply invites his neighbors to drag him from bed at night and duck him in the nearest horse-pond. If he comes into conflict with the law, he is sure of a fair trial only if he can prove that he is white, a Protestant, a Democrat and a monogamist. If some sweet one of the darker races arouses his baser nature, he is forbidden to make an honest woman of her on penalty of 20 years' imprisonment. If his system craves alcohol, he must drink raw corn whiskey or nothing. And if, when a drive is started by boob-catchers employed by the Y. M. C. A. or some other such dubious organization, he refuses to contribute, he is attacked with such rancor that the damage he suffers is worse than bankruptcy.

To call such a fellow a free man is to go counter to the most palpable facts. Compared to him, the lowliest slave in Rome was a footloose and innocent gazelle upon the plains. Yet the word slavery causes him to tremble and go pale; he abhors it as he abhors the names of Darwin and Beelzebub. He abhors it so much, indeed, that he shrinks from any mention of re-enslaving the blackamoors, though he is trying his best to re-enslave them in fact. Worse, these blackamoors themselves shiver when they hear the word, though the thing itself would unquestionably rescue them from most of their current troubles. They'd rather be "free" chained to an upright rail with a pyre of fat pineknots burning under them, than "slaves" in a comfortable cabin, with plenty of hog-meat in the smokehouse and no tax bills to pay. To such heights of unintelligent fanaticism has man risen in his worship of words. In such manner does he permit rhetoricians to fool and victimize him.



# Son and Brother

*By Hannah Bryant*

**T**HE idea of him was forever present in their minds. It was the high glittering background against which performed their every thought and feat of imagination. And it was so resplendent an affair that it dwarfed whatever else stepped across the stage of their experience.

There were the three of them: the father, an engaging figure with his erect shoulders, his deep gray eyes, his soft gray hair; and two daughters, both well along in years and very like in appearance, with their erect shoulders, their deep gray eyes and softly graying hair. The father had been a minister of the gospel, and to be with him, to partake, as of rather flat wine, of the suavity of his manner, to observe how seriously he strove to take himself and his ideals, and then to note in contrast the nervous clearing of his throat, the wistful, almost apologetic restlessness of his hands, was to know without being told, in what capacity he had served life. And the vocational experience of his daughters was almost as easily surmised; their methodized minds which had imposed methodized standards of living, proclaimed them school teachers. Now they were like two leaves on a bough, having budded, bloomed and faded in the exact manner of all leaves of their particular variety, they succeeded in making a quiet standardized art of their refusal to fear, even casually, the wind. Their conscientious activities had earned for them reputations as important cultural influences, but the delicate health of one daughter and the father's accumulation of

years, finally forced them to give up their pursuits in the city and to retire to a small country town, where with the persuasion of modest agricultural interests, their slender income sufficed.

The fourth and youngest member of the family—the son and brother, and he who stood as the symbol of their combined aspirations—had been so much aloof from the family circle that he had never been considered as one of them. During his early boyhood and later, when, at the mother's death he had been left entirely to their care, he had lived among them and yet was not of them. Always he had seemed the guest, always the other members of the family had served as hosts, patently uncertain of their qualifications as such and deeply conscious of the honor his presence conferred upon them.

As he grew up, inclined to be self-willed and not a little intractable, no one of the three was known to utter a disparaging word of him. After some misdemeanor or escapade, when the gentle probe of their analysis determined that the fault was lodged in their discipline, their criticism was all for each other. Many times they agreed that father should not have gone so far, that one sister or the other should not have taken such and such a stand. And always they wound up with the admonition to remember that there was every evidence of his having inherited the artistic, high-strung temperament which had distinguished the mother's side of the house. At this point their voices invariably took on the hushed

quality of reverence; in softly running tones suggestive of gray water moving under gray skies, they called to mind Greataunt So-and-so or Grandfather This-or-that—she who had sung, he who had modelled, written or painted—and other heirs of the coveted temperament who would undoubtedly have developed creditable talent had not the responsibilities of life crept in between them and the fruits of artistic achievement.

At eighteen the boy ran away and went to sea. For many months they heard nothing from him. Then frequent letters began to come, each bearing an intimation of need for funds. The question was never raised among the family as to whether it would be within its limited means to comply. The required amount usually left by return mail, and father and sisters denied themselves the simple luxuries which might have tempted them and even the things which could be termed necessities. These incidents elicited no comment, but the letters themselves were subjects of much profound discourse. To the family, they seemed to exude something of the big rolling space over which they had traveled, an atmosphere that whipped up the gray quiet of the home as a wind bellies a sail.

Later something more than letters came: short character sketches, verse and eventually vivid tales of adventure. The arrival of each was epochal. In their appraisal of them the members of the family became devout with enthusiasm, and in time it was proved that a more expert criticism was to substantiate their judgment. For the sisters, after prayerfully weeding out occasional youthful crudities from the material sent them, and a breathless study of literary markets, submitted and sold portions of it to discriminating periodicals.

There followed an interval of years that was a period of grave pride and contentment in the history of the family. For the first time there was

unlimited nourishment to sustain without effort the unified and always healthy faith in the son and brother. The tentative success of his first literary attempts grew, as his ability grew, into substantial recognition, and the family was modestly stimulated with reflected importance. The father resurrected from the past little pomposities of manner, suggestive of the pulpit. The sisters emerged from their accustomed reserve to develop mild traits of sociability, and even became argumentative in contending with one another for the fullest expression of their brother's accomplishments.

He had given up the calling of seaman and his life of vagabondage soon after his first successes, and had linked himself with the life of the metropolis. During these years he paid them flashing visits. But, on the whole, his presence was not so fulfilling as was his radiant absence. He was much the man of the world now; he had ways of speech, of thought, of living, that were so dissimilar to those with which the other members of the family were accustomed, that being with him was a strain, not upon their appreciation, but upon their understanding. Absent, the fogs of disparity fell away from him, and they saw him, clear and luminous, in their undying idea of him.

He married. They had their first opportunity of meeting his wife at the time of her only visit to them. She had been ill and came for a protracted stay to recuperate. The sisters heaped every care and attention upon her, but at her departure they found it difficult to explain her with any accuracy yet discreetly. She had been on the stage. And about the only adjective they found applicable to her was: vivid. Relieved at finding a definition, they told each other often that hers was a vivid personality. It was, in truth, so vivid a personality that something of its brilliance—the sheen of her hair, the

clashing hues of her gowns, the high colors of her voice—lingered about their quiet rooms and even out in the garden and through the orchard, long after she had gone.

Justification of their brother's choice of a wife was not so difficult to define. Various and extenuating factors threw light upon his action: his present environment, for instance, and the impulsive, chivalrous traits in his blood. Misty, legendary stories drifted across their memories; they recalled fragments of affairs, to which their mother had vaguely alluded, concerning this or that distinguished ancestor. They were not surprised, nor pleased nor displeased, to learn a few years later that there had been a separation.

Further than this, they knew little of the life that claimed him. His career they followed breathlessly. They subscribed to a clipping bureau and religiously preserved every item concerning him for a scrapbook that grew beautifully big. They knew he had become one of the well-known novelists of the day. Of the extent of his financial achievements, they had but an elusive conception, although it was a matter of gratification to them to understand enough to know that all pecuniary worries for him were at an end. And they were profoundly touched when sometimes at the season of Christmas, and now and then on birthday anniversaries, they received from him elaborate gifts. The fact that his remembrances were chosen indiscriminately, being in the main, articles of inappropriate apparel, did not take from the ardor of their gratitude. Each gift was treasured and laid away in the cedar chest by reverent hands, where it

served not even the purpose of the moth.

One day he surprised them by appearing at the door, looking not at all well. He told them he was worn out and had come home to rest. The three brooded over him rather like troubled birds. In a few hours he was ill with pneumonia, and before a week had passed he was dead.

His attorney came down for the funeral. He took the family into his confidence and told them that as he had recently drawn up the will of the deceased, he was in a position to know that he had left a considerable fortune. For a man of law, he displayed but little verbal adroitness, for at this juncture when he felt three pairs of very gray, very deep eyes fastened upon him, he blurted it out. He had left a considerable fortune but he had left it all to his stenographer.

They accepted the news with an unconcern that seemed to him not only unusual but a trifle alarming.

At the funeral while the minister was speaking of what he termed the steadfast qualities, the exemplary life of the departed, or as the organ flooded the church with tragedies of thick, cadenced sound, and although many in the congregation were visibly affected, the three members of the family maintained an unbroken composure. The father's head was still erect. The sisters sat side by side, chins a little higher than usual, backs a little straighter, and with more than ever a profundity of expression in their eyes. There was not the thinnest suggestion of grief in their attitude. It was not their idea of him that was dead.



**A**FTER God had created man He feared he might someday make himself a god too; so He gave him love.

# A Study in Nationalities

By Roda Roda

CLAIRE and I were sitting in the Café Barnils, Nice.

At another table we noticed a number of men.

"Why do the idiots insist on talking French, when they don't know how?"

Claire enlightened me. "They are foreigners, each from a different country. Somehow, they want to make themselves understood. So they do their best in French."

A young lady had been sipping chocolate at a table near by. She now paid, arose, and left . . . forgetting her gold mesh purse.

The Englishman was the first to notice it. But he decided not to bother, since it obviously was none of his business.

The Frenchman had followed his eyes. He jumped up, excited as a rabbit. "*Quel bonheur!*" he cried. "I will bring her the purse and become acquainted with her. She is charming!" And off he rushed.

"Such a scatter-brain!" chuckled the Austrian. "Runs after the girl,

and leaves the purse behind! Well, we can give it to the manager. She'll call for it eventually."

"Indeed not!" the Prussian spoke up. "I shall take it to the police station and claim the legal reward."

The Russian, dreamy and slow, vaguely wondered what it was all about.

The Roumanian tried to persuade the others that the young lady was his sister. They should let him have the purse. He would return it to her . . .

"Well, if she's his sister!" genially decided the Austrian, "that simplifies matters. Of course we'll give it to him."

They looked for the purse. . . . It was gone.

I had distinctly seen—I could swear to it—that the Greek stole it.

Shaking and cowardly, he allowed himself to be searched. The purse was not on him. . . .

Meanwhile the Armenian, pleasantly whistling, had left the Café.



I AM never so deeply impressed by the irrationality of nature as when I meet a beautiful but faithful woman.



IT is given to women alone to be in love and still retain their self-respect.





# The Vaudeville Doctor

By John Forbes

## I

**I**N a Connecticut town, an artist, once first violinist of the court orchestra of a now defunct empire, was washing dishes for a living.

With the assistance of a few friends, he had come to America from his native land confident that in a short time he could reimburse those friends an hundredfold.

His reception in New York was such that washing dishes in the Connecticut town did not seem bad. From his savings he was repaying his creditors in the dismembered land across the sea.

After the last penny had been paid . . .

## II

THE glazed door to the right of the elevator on the seventh story of a building just off Broadway in the forties bears this legend:

MAX SPIEGAL  
THE VAUDEVILLE DOCTOR  
PUTS THEM ALL ACROSS

Just inside is a large office, with three girls typing busily, one acting also as office "boy" and operator of the small switchboard connecting with Mr. Spiegel's inner office.

On the other side of the door, marked in large capitals, *Private*, Spiegel sits at a large oak desk, while before him are three men and a woman who have brought their vaudeville act for diagnosis.

"Let me think," says Spiegel, gazing impressively at the brass doorknob at his right. "I must concentrate on this matter."

The vaudeville doctor's brow wrinkles. It is easily apparent he is concentrating. Suddenly he bangs his fist on the top of the desk.

"I have it!" he shouts enthusiastically. "Two of you play the violin, and the other two is anxious to learn music. You say you just took up music for your own amusement. All right, but you're interested in making good, and your acrobat stuff ain't getting across right. Now then, you'll have two violins, a flute and a saxophone. Got to have at least one saxophone with every musical act these days. You have a drop with the act representing the stage of a big concert hall. Got to have a few palms setting around, and maybe some artificial cut flowers in a big gold vase. Everybody's in evening dress when the curtain goes up, see. You're playing 'Humoresque,' or some other classical dance piece like that. The audience is just beginning to get the swing of the number when the first violin does a back handspring without missing a note. This will knock the audience coo-coo, because they haven't looked for an acrobatics. Of course, the theatre orchestra will be helpin' you out on the tune, and nobody will notice if you do miss a note here and there. Then the flutist will take a fall out of them by suddenly whirling around three times on the ball of his right foot, followed by a headspin which lands him back on his feet again without touching the floor with his hands.

"Just as the applause dies down, the lady violinist will do a back-to-back turn over the male violinist, and you take your first bow. Then the male

violinist will come down front and a pair of flying rings will be let down from the flies. He hooks his knees in the rings, and then, hanging upside down, he plays some good swing song, at the same time swinging away out over the heads of the audience. This ain't been done before. It's bran new, my own idea. It will knock them for a ghou. For the finale you can have the flutist hop on the shoulders of the male violinist and saxophone player, and the lady violinist can climb up on the flutist's shoulders, all playing 'Yankee Doodle.' The lady violinist can have an American flag hidden along the bow of her violin, and when the last note is struck, she can release it."

Spiegel was feeling fresh for the day's work on the day following his prescription for the four acrobats.

A man awaited him on his arrival at the office.

Spiegel finished his cigar leisurely before pressing the buzzer indicating he was prepared to see the "patient."

The visitor told an old story. He was a violinist of ordinary merit who could play good music without technical fault, but also without individual expression in his interpretations. He had missed greatness by a few inches, which is of little comfort to him, or interest to us.

No, he didn't think he could play jazz in a Broadway orchestra. He had tried it with little success. Several places had let him go after a trial of a week or so.

Vaudeville appeared his only hope, but somehow his stuff didn't go over right even there.

"What music do you play best?" asked Spiegel, rubbing his pudgy hands.

The "patient" played Schubert better than any of the others.

"I must think it over," said Spiegel.

The visitor moved as to leave, but Spiegel told him to remain.

"If I concentrate," he said, "I think I can diagnose your case in twenty minutes or so."

After ten minutes of intensive think-

ing, Spiegel looked up, elated, with the glad news, "I've got it!"

"I've seen pictures of this fellow, Schubert. You're about his build, and you've got a nose shaped something like his, although that wouldn't matter much, as they could make you up anyway. Now, then, all you've got to do is get in with some good character actor and get him to show you how to make up like this fellow, Schubert. Get the same kind of old style clothes like he wore, and wear your hair long—you can get a wig made from a photograph of him.

"When the curtain goes up, you are in front of a fireplace in your old home in Europe. There are some beer steins on the mantel over the fireplace. Your violin is in its case on the piano. All at once you get up and come up stage. You remark, 'Well, that was a good supper I had tonight—guess I'll play a little tune.' Then you go over and get your violin out of the case, tune it up, and let them have one of your numbers, although I'd cut it in half if I was you, as the audience can get the swing of it without playing it all the way through. It's probably too long, anyway. Then the curtain goes down for a minute and a stage hand comes out and puts a card up announcing the next piece. Then you come out and play a medley of all his good pieces, which will take about eight minutes. Then the curtain goes down again, and a stage hand comes out and puts up a card saying, 'By Request.' This next piece must be one of the saddest things this fellow Schubert ever wrote. It's got to be full of pathos, a tear-punch in every note.

"When the curtain goes up on your old room in Europe, the stage is empty. You come in tearing your hair, and saying, 'My God, mother has just died!' You put your arm to your eyes—your right arm—and your left hand is behind your back. The fingers open and shut, registering deep emotion.

"Then your eyes roam over the piano where the violin is. You stagger over and pat the violin with your hand, saying, 'Well, old pal, you're all I have left

in the world now that the best friend a man ever had is gone, my darling mother! Then you take the violin, but don't tune it this time, as that would spoil the effect. No, you have it already tuned. You pick it up and play the saddest thing this fellow Schubert ever wrote. As you finish the last note, you collapse on the floor and the violin falls on the floor and a string breaks. You can bill your act, 'The Broken String, or Moments with the Great Master, Schubert.

### III

Two months later, Spiegel, the vaudeville doctor, was musing with satisfaction that the royalties from his business were piling up at the rate of nearly two thousand dollars a month.

He was particularly gratified at the success of his prescription for the broken-down violinist, now playing the "two-a-day" with "The Broken String," which swept all audiences before it.

Incidentally, he had virtually revolutionized the formerly prosaic vaudeville openers, the acrobats. Scarcely a vaudeville acrobat could now be definitely stamped as such when the curtain first rose on his act.

While he mused, the telephone rang, and a man urged an immediate appointment for a diagnosis of the malady which had prevented his musical act from getting across.

Spiegel told him to come right over. Then he smiled, and remarked that it was some time since he had prescribed for a straight musical act.

A short time later the musician entered and anxiously laid his case before the noted specialist.

It appeared he was a pianist. Like so many other musical failures, in vaudeville, it seemed he could not put the proper dash into his music for success at jazz.

He played classical music best.

"Ah, let me think," said Spiegel, entering a kind of professional trance.

Presently, he emerged from it with boundless enthusiasm.

"My friend," he said, "your case is a simple one. Here's the answer: You can play your classical pieces, if you want to, and I'll show you how to get away with it!

"When they give you the curtain, you are seated at the piano. You look out at the audience and recite a little poem to slow music, about how fast an age we're living in, and there's hardly time any more for the good old songs.

"You tell about the old lullaby your old mother used to sing to you. Then you play some beauteous lullaby, while the lights go low, to represent twilight. You got to carry a character woman and a kid, unless you happen to be married and have a kid son, or else borrow them as you go.

"When you play this lullaby, the spot light is turned on a tableau of a mother rocking her baby to sleep. That'll get them.

"For your next number you can play, 'Shine Little Glowworm, Glimmer,' with a flimsy drop to represent a tree. It's transparent and when you start to play this piece the footlights go down and through the transparent curtain you can flash little electric bulbs which will make it look like the tree was full of glowworms. Keep enough blue lights out front so's the tree painted on the drop can still be seen.

"For the finale, I've got a knockout. You come out and announce you are about to perform an impossible feat of pianamism. You take your place at the piano, and start to play a tune with one hand. The 'Sextette from Lushah' would be a good number. As you're getting started with this song with your left hand, you begin working in another song with your right. Suddenly the audience begins to clap their hands as they recognize the other pieces you are playing with the right hand. Guess what it is—nope, it's 'Yes, We Have No Bananas'!"

### IV

SPIEGAL had finished his day's work,

and was looking over an evening paper when he chanced on this story from Bridgeport, Connecticut:

A man, whose effects indicate that he was once a famous musician at the court of the Emperor of Austria, committed suicide by shooting himself through the head in his hall room in a cheap boarding-house here today.

Beside the body, police found a violin which is believed a Stradivarius. A gold medal was

found pinned to the coat of the suicide. The woman who keeps the boarding-house said the musician had worked at dish-washing in a downtown restaurant.

Spiegel shook his head as he read this story.

"Too bad," he said. "If that fellow had of come to me I'd of made something out of him."



## Ragman

*By Leonard Lanson Cline*

RAGMAN, ragman,  
What do you mean to say,  
Creeping through the alley,  
Blowing your horn?  
Any old rags,  
Any old clothes today . . .  
Any old Aprils,  
Tattered and worn.

Here is a suit I'll sell.  
Brush off the dust and see  
How handsome once it was,  
How soft the cloth.  
How young I was one time, what dreams  
This coat has warmed in me,  
My pocket full of stars! . . .  
Time, and the dust, and the moth.

Take it, and go away.  
Something of me is there,  
Something beautiful  
I could not keep;  
Something of her and June  
And dusk and dark hair.  
Take it all,  
Rags for your heap.

Take it, and go.  
But I shall hear all day  
The mournful yellow whine of your horn,  
The creak of your cart  
Creeping through the alley,  
To carry away  
Threadbare years that have hung forgot  
In the dust of the heart.



# Americana

By Major Owen Hatteras, D.S.O.

## I

### Arkansas

Progress of the enlightenment in Arkansas, as revealed by a hot blast by the Hon. Clio Harper in the estimable *Arkansas Democrat*:

Fortune-telling, by whatever means, by the use of pictured pasteboards employed by gamblers as the instruments of their speculations, by lines in the palm due to natural flexation, by mystical incantations of mercenary fakirs, by signs and portents of inanimate things, or by the bald chicanery of the trance-medium or the clairvoyant charlatan—fortune-telling is a reflection upon the intelligence of those who by their encouragement perpetuate the fraud and deceive themselves. That God should reveal the future, uncover that which is hidden, or rend the veil of that which is yet to be, through such media, is unthinkable as it is contrary to all reason and established fact.

## II

### Arkansas

Patriotic boast of a 100% Arkansan in the learned *Century Magazine*:

During the war Arkansas, by voluntary denial, saved more sugar than any other State in the Union; so much so that the boys in France read on the wrappings of their sweets, "The sugar for this was saved by the patriotic people of Arkansas." Fort Smith has the largest sorghum factory in the world, the largest wagon factory west of the Mississippi, three glass plants, three smelters, and natural gas in large amounts. The State is rich in diamonds and other minerals.

## III

### California

Extract from a patriotic catechism

taught to the children in the public schools of Los Angeles:

*Question*—Where is the State of California located?

*Answer*—On the front side of the American continent, between the rest of the United States and the Pacific Ocean, and near the Panama Canal.

*Q.*—Why is Southern California famous?

*A.*—It contains Los Angeles.

*Q.*—What is Los Angeles?

*A.*—The climatic capital of the United States.

*Q.*—To what has it been likened?

*A.*—To paradise, heaven, Eden and the Riviera.

*Q.*—Which does it most resemble?

*A.*—It is a happy combination of all of them.

*Q.*—What is the population of Los Angeles?

*A.*—900,000 boosters. (Will be more tomorrow.)

*Q.*—What is a booster?

*A.*—One who knows a good thing and wants others to come and share it.

*Q.*—Of whom does the population consist?

*A.*—Mostly of people from Iowa, together with many former residents of other States and a sprinkling of native sons.

*Q.*—Into what two classes may the people of the United States be divided?

*A.*—Those who have already seen Southern California and those who intend to see it soon.

*Q.*—What are Eastern visitors called while visiting Los Angeles?

*A.*—Tourists.

*Q.*—What is a tourist?

*A.*—A permanent resident in the bud.

*Q.*—What things may a tourist see in and around Los Angeles that he does not see back East?

*A.*—Oranges, ostriches, lemons, alligators, olives, missions, sardines, aqueducts, harbors, tunas, bungalows, abalones, loquats, casaba melons, horned toads, snow-covered peaks, submarine gardens, yuccas, eucalyptus, palms, pepper trees, cafeterias, Thanksgiving celery and Christmas strawberries.

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## IV

*California*

Extract from a letter from an explorer in those parts:

The other day I made a visit to San Quentin Prison. It seems to be as good a place to live in as the outside world. I was particularly impressed by the lethal chamber, with the ropes hanging down in waiting, each kept stretched by a weight. I selected mine—a manila of about the same hue as my third best girl's hair. Think of it! A dozen ropes ready, and the men not even murdered yet!

## V

*California*

The worship of God as carried on at the First Congregational Church, San Francisco, from an advertisement in one of the local papers:

Sunday evening, 7.45 o'clock, Dr. Gordon will answer twelve questions:

1—How can a mother retain the confidence of her daughter?

2—What is the science of managing a wife?

3—Did Conan Doyle make any converts to Spiritualism when visiting San Francisco?

4—Does Christian Science prescribe a special diet?

5—Should the Pope exercise his influence on the Ruhr situation?

6—What is the most dangerous period in married life?

7—Why are the Mohammedans of Palestine in possession of the tombs of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob?

8—Do women smoke for enjoyment or "effect"?

9—How can we get along with relatives who rub us the wrong way?

10—Is it right to invade the privacy of an Egyptian tomb?

11—Are not traveling lecturers on "Psychology" making too much money?

12—Did you meet Maude Royden in London?

## VI

*California*

Effects of Prohibition in Sacramento, as reported by the San Francisco Examiner:

Deputy Sheriff M. V. Robbins found many girls and boys of high school age under the

influence of liquor during a survey made Saturday and Sunday nights. He said he found a young girl lying in a stupor on the running board of an automobile near a dance hall at Florin, and her male companion unconscious nearby; another girl, semi-conscious, was in the back of a machine with her male companion too drunk to assist her; another girl lay across the hood of an automobile.

## VII

*Colorado*

From the *Grit-Advocate*, published at Julesburg:

The intellectual geniuses of the world have been church-attending Christians.

## VIII

*District of Columbia*

The higher learning at the capital of the greatest free nation on God's green footstool:

The Frelinghuysen University, 1800 Vermont Ave., Washington, D. C.

Featuring an education for older people, who, for any reason, were deprived of it in their younger days. Evening classes for higher education to people who have to work.

School of Law, Theology, *Chiropractic*, Home Economics, *Embalming*, and Sanitary Science, Academic courses. Liberal Arts: Applied Science, Fine Arts, Stenography and Typewriting.

Jesse Lawson, A.B., A.M., LL.D., Ph.D., Pres. 16th year. Phone North 5864. Fall Term.

## IX

*District of Columbia*

Telegram sent from San Francisco the day after the death of Dr. Harding by the Hon. Hubert Work, M.D., Secretary of the Interior:

Let every employee of the Department of the Interior stand firm. The Republic must go on.

## X

*Georgia*

Results of the uplift in Kukluxia, as reported by the Hon. Burr Blackburn,



secretary of the Georgia Council of Social Agencies, in the *Journal of Social Forces*:

It is becoming more and more bearable to be a Georgian.

## XI

### *Iowa*

Exultant news item from the *Democrat and Leader* of Davenport, Iowa, the chiropractic Rome:

Before an audience of more than 6,000 chiropractors and their friends yesterday afternoon "chiropractic's queen," Mabel H. Palmer, delivered an address of welcome and received in return a mighty ovation from her thousands of admirers.

It was one of those once-in-a-lifetime events for Mrs. Palmer. It placed her unconquerably to the front as one of the greatest women of our time. But a brief space ago Paris and the world shared a woman of destiny in Sarah Bernhardt. Today Davenport and the world shares an equally great and wonderful woman in Mabel Palmer.

## XII

### *Michigan*

Moral news from Kalamazoo:

Dancing partners will be prohibited from looking into each other's eyes under twenty-eight amendments to a dancing ordinance which has passed first reading before the city commission. The amendments are designed to prohibit improper attitudes and steps observed by policewomen in three years of dance hall supervision. The provision against dancers looking into each other's eyes is held to be in the interest of health, in that it will make it impossible for them to breathe into each other's faces.

## XIII

### *Michigan*

From an encyclical to 100% Americans by the Rev. Dr. A. Edwin Barrows, extension secretary of the World Prohibition and Reform Federation, of Detroit:

There is no room for God or prayer in 5 per cent beer.

## XIV

### *Missouri*

Effects of the evil machinations of French spies in St. Louis, as reported

S.S.—Dec.—5

in a United Press dispatch from that city:

With visions of some day returning to Africa and becoming first citizens among their less favored brethren in their ancestral land, scores of St. Louis Negroes are taking up the study of Arabic. Their leader is Sheik Ahmid Din, who holds weekly Moslem religious services, where the language is being picked up by the Negroes. Ahmid Din is his Moslem name. He was christened P. N. Johnson.

"I have one hundred converts in St. Louis and I have been here six months," the Sheik said. "We are gaining rapidly."

## XV

### *New Jersey*

From a sermon delivered to the faithful by the Rev. Dr. Charles H. Rannels, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Hoboken:

The greatest benefit which heaven has sent to America in recent years has come in the Ku Klux Klan.

## XVI

### *New York*

Progress of human freedom in the Empire State, as revealed by a news dispatch from Mt. Vernon, N. Y., under date of August 9 last:

Christopher Reilly, a mechanic, was held in \$200 bail tonight charged with disorderly conduct, on complaint of his employer, who stated he had scoffed at a request to suspend work tomorrow in observance of the funeral of President Harding in Marion.

## XVII

### *New York*

News note from East Rockaway:

The Ku Klux Klan of Nassau county is leading all other local organizations in the popularity contest being conducted here by the soldiers' memorial committee in connection with a block party to be held to raise funds for a memorial monument.

The Knights of Columbus is second in the contest.

A steel engraving of the White House bearing the signature of Mrs. Calvin Coolidge, which was sent to a member of the committee, will be sold to the highest bidder at the party

XVIII  
*Pennsylvania*

Card in the Greenburg, Pa., *Morning Review*, signed by the Hon. A. P. Addleman, candidate for the office of sheriff in Westmoreland county:

In introducing myself to the voters of the county, I think the Christian should know that I believe in the Word of God, entirely, from the first word of Genesis to the last letter in Revelation, and, of course, believe that a nation or people who forget God will perish.

XIX  
*Pennsylvania*

From a leading editorial in the estimable *Ladies' Home Journal*, of Philadelphia:

There is only one first-class civilization in the world today. It's right here in the United States and the Dominion of Canada. . . . The Nineteenth Amendment is one of the irrefutable proofs that this is the only first-class civilization in the world.

XX  
*South Dakota*

Effects of the great open spaces, with their fauna of red-blooded, go-getting he-men, upon a Yale professor, as reported by the amiable William Lyon Phelps in *Scribner's Magazine*:

This week I have been in South Dakota. The reason why I was excited at entering South Dakota was because it was the only State in the Union which I had not seen, and I wished to add this jewel to my crown. When the train paused at Millbank, the first stop in the State, I sprang to the ground, seized a handful of the soil and shouted, "SOUTH DAKOTA!" For years I had longed for that moment, as I did not wish to die until I had been in every State in my country.

XXI  
*Tennessee*

Versatility of the *Gelehrten* in Tennessee, as revealed by an announcement of Cumberland University in the *Nashville Tennessean*:

Miss Miller holds an A.B. degree and has had several years' experience in teaching history and gymnasium work.

XXII  
*Tennessee*

Resolutions adopted by the Vim-Vigor-Victory Bible Class of the Union Congregational Church of East Lake, Tenn., denouncing the opening of gasoline stations on the Sabbath, as reported by the consecrated *Chattanooga Times*:

*Resolved*; That we, the Vim-Vigor-Victory class, denounce the inference contained in a filling station ad in Sunday's *Times*, that Chattanooga is a crossroads town, because its God-fearing people have taken steps to close the filling stations on Sunday. The same ad asks, "Shall we send our visitors to Georgia?" If we do send a few tourists to Georgia it will advertise the fact that we are 100 per cent Americans who think more of God's Sabbath than the opinion of a few wandering tourists. When these same tourists get to Georgia they will find that they can buy less on Sunday than they can in Tennessee, gas excepted. If their opinions are worth anything they will respect us for our stand. If anyone is too lazy to fill his gas tank on Saturday, he can move to some real city where respect for the Sabbath is secondary to the wishes of some of our European citizens. Be it further

*Resolved*: That we heartily commend the editorial in Saturday's *Times*, as reflecting the sentiment of the best of our citizenship.

XXIII  
*Tennessee*

Proud boast of the Hon. George F. Milton, Jr., editor of the learned *Chattanooga News*:

Chattanooga makes more hosiery than any city of the country save Philadelphia. Her rank in the production of furniture, refrigerators, leather, oil-well machinery, glass, patent medicines, hardwood lumber, is high. With 382 separate industries, her diversification compares well with Bridgeport, Conn.

XXIV  
*Texas*

Specimen of elegaic verse from the great republic of Texas, where the

Nordic blond ranges the great open  
spaces unfettered and unafraid:

WARREN G. HARDING

Black crepe hangs on our country's door;  
The flag at half mast flies;  
For he has gone to hear no more  
Us praise or criticize.

A sacrifice to a principle,  
He taxed his strength too long.  
World Court, or League Invincible:  
How know we which is wrong?

Republican and Democrat  
Alike each bows his head.  
Thank God there are no politics  
In grief for the Nation's dead!

—Mamie G. Zuber.

XXV

*Vermont*

From the memories of the Hon.  
Calvin Coolidge:

Back in 1880, when I was a child at Plymouth, Vermont, I asked my father for a cent to buy some hoarhound candy. He heard me gravely and then informed me just as gravely that it looked to him as if a Democratic President would be elected that fall, and that it behooved every prudent man to exercise especial thrift. Therefore he would be obliged to deny my request.



## The Ancient Misgiving

*By A. Newberry Choyce*

THE night is ours, our own since we believe it,  
Ten million years have levelled us this mead  
And bred this sweet dense multitude of daisies  
For our proud feet to bruise and scarcely heed.

The fretful owl that hooted at our coming  
Was he not but begotten to do thus?  
Think of the day the little pulpy acorns  
Bestirred to make these forest oaks for us!

If one should challenge it, I'd tell him, "Liar!  
That moon was made especially for me."  
And yet . . . and yet . . . the pitiful brave lovers  
Laid time on time beneath the cypress tree.



THE reason that the tactiturn fellow nabs the girlie nine times out of ten  
is not that he especially attracts her, but that he fails to irritate her as  
the loquacious one, sooner or later, is almost certain to do.



SOME women win men by laughing at their wit; others by weeping at their  
cruelty. The most subtle achieve their conquests by merely smiling at  
a man's amorous efforts.



# Sister Veolane

*By Alfons Petzold*

**H**ALF of the world already is covered with snow; and yet it continues to fall, with heavy, slow flakes, all through the silent afternoon.

Down in the village the church-bell rings for benediction. That bell was cast long, long ago, in the devout times of the Middle Ages; this is why it has such deep and pious tones.

Like singing angels the tones run across the snow, perch themselves on the broad sill before our window, and with the exultant rush of their message fill our room and souls:

"God is Love—God is Love!"

Our ward sister enters, almost noiseless on her felt slippers. Only the low clinking of the heavy rosary that hangs from her slender hip makes me look up and turn.

Silently, sister Veolane greets me, with a gentle glance of her large eyes—eyes that still have so much of youth in them!

What a loving companion this woman could have been for some man! Or what a wonderful comrade for a number of men! One after the other

they would have found happiness in this beauty of her and in this devoted soul. And how great, how holy would be the smile with which, in later years, she would look back upon a life filled with love and active reality. . . . But now!

Like a dream, like a shadow, she flits from bed to bed, smoothing a pillow here, filling a tumbler there. Her movements already are touched by the weariness of the winter afternoon. A few years more and the snow of resignation will have covered her completely. . . .

Silently, as she came, she disappears again.

In my thoughts I follow her as she glides along the vaulted hall, down the stairs, into the chapel that yawns cold and dark like the grave.

Still the ancient bell booms its message:

"God is Love—God is Love!"

Irresistibly I feel myself drawn up from my bed, on to the window. I throw it open. And, as loudly as I can, I call out into the white world:

"Man is Love—Man!"



**H**OW futile a thing to analyze a woman. One either learns nothing or else wishes that one had.



**T**HE happiest marriages are never those of the most fascinating couples.





# The Visiting Girl

By Thyra Samter Winslow

[Author of "Picture Frames"]

## I

ELLA DEMING knew all about Visiting Girls. She had watched their influx into Hunter's Falls ever since she was sixteen. The process was always the same. One of the girls of The Crowd—and there was only one at-all-possible social set in Hunter's Falls—would say, casually:

"I'm going to have a visitor, starting next Tuesday—Roberta Reynolds, from Black Fork. She's just a darling girl—awfully popular—the boys are simply crazy about her—she's the girl I met when I was at school and that I visited last summer. I'm going to give a dance for her at the Club and—"

It was odd. All of the visiting girls were "darling girls" and "awfully popular at home." Perhaps because of this advance advertising and because, too, any visiting girl is a novelty and a girl doesn't dare have a visitor unless that visitor will, in a measure, shed popularity and social favors upon her, the visiting girls were always in demand. There were always parties for them. Too, if things were worked rightly, and things usually were, the visiting girl was quite apt to catch one of the eligible men. In Hunter's Falls there weren't many eligible men. It would have seemed that the girls would have banded together against visiting girls. On the contrary, they actually welcomed them.

Ella Deming wasn't afraid of visiting girls. She had Ted Burrows. Ted was different. He was nice to the visiting girls, of course. Ella wanted him to be. She wanted each visiting girl to see

what a good dancer he was, to hear his quick repartee, to notice, even, how handsome he was. Weren't many men as nice as Ted! Let the visiting girls think of that when they went on their man hunt. Ella always held herself a bit away from the visiting girls, almost feeling ashamed of their tactics.

"I wonder if they pull all that line in their own towns?" she'd say to herself, or "Gee, look at what Bob Fulton is falling for. If one of the Hunter's Falls girls pulled that stuff he'd laugh himself sick."

Still, why should she worry? Didn't she and Ted laugh at the visiting girl's antics, driving home from parties in Ted's car? Of course. She and Ted weren't engaged, actually, but they had been going together more or less regularly for four years and Ella was twenty-two. They talked, though, of "if we ever have a home of our own" and "you needn't think, if we get married, Mr. Ted Burrows, that I'll put up with things like *that*." They had lovely times together.

## II

MARGERY HOLLOWAY, of Dunham, came to visit Freda Fulton. There was the usual announcement of her coming, the usual preamble of parties being arranged, the usual newspaper announcement in the social columns of Hunter's Falls' *News*.

Miss Freda Fulton will have as her guest in the near future Miss Margery Holloway of Dunham. Several parties will be given for Miss Holloway during her visit here. Miss

Fulton will introduce her guest with an informal dance next Tuesday night at her home in Elm Street.

Ella smiled. What did a visiting girl mean to her? She'd give her a party, maybe—four tables of bridge—Freda had been awfully nice to her, she "owed" a lot of parties, anyhow.

Of course Ella wasn't worried about Ted. She didn't even think of Ted and the visiting girl—not even when she saw for herself—things like that don't happen—why—she and Ted—

It started right in, that first evening, that dance at Freda's. Ella had worn a new dress. She had made it herself but she thought it looked far from homemade, at that. Summer dresses are easy enough to make—these new styles. You just take two widths of the goods—It was a faint lemony silk and soft and she'd tied a wide ribbon at the waist. She had nice light soft hair and she wore it bobbed and straight. She thought that she looked rather well, for her. She wasn't a beauty, of course. She knew that. Little and slim, but not ugly either. Her eyes were nice. Everyone always told her that. Nice gray eyes and far apart. Her face was heart-shaped. Ted told her that enough so she couldn't forget it. "Nice little heart-face," he'd always tell her. Ella knew what he meant. It was that there was a widow's peak at her forehead and that her forehead was broad and that she had a pointed chin. She liked being called that, when Ted said it.

Of course perhaps it was silly, being in love with Ted. You shouldn't be in love with anyone you've known for years, the way she had known Ted for years. Maybe it wasn't love, after all. Yet, if that wasn't love, that curious, dizzy sort of feeling when Ted was near, closing her eyes when he put his hand on her hair, wanting to snuggle close to him whenever there was the least excuse, being almost breathless when she heard his voice on the telephone—his dear voice—wanting to put out groping fingers to touch his hand—maybe that wasn't love; if it wasn't Ella didn't know about love, anyhow.

Still, there was that Rupert Brooke poem. When the other girls quoted India Love Lyrics and all sorts of things about unrequited love, Ella always thought of that. The one called "Songs." The last verse of it:

*"And so I never feared to see  
You wander down the street,  
Or come across the fields to me  
On ordinary feet.  
For what they'd never told me of,  
And what I never knew;  
It was that all the time, my love,  
Love would be merely you."*

That was it! Merely Ted, with his nice dark, sleek hair and his nice dark eyes and his "interesting" nose, quite straight excepting when you just got one certain view of it. Ted, coming to her "on ordinary feet." Of course.

On the way to the party she and Ted had joked about a dozen things. She remembered that. Ted had told her how nice she looked. "You *are* a sweet thing," he had said. She wished they were engaged, really. Ted was funny about things like that. She wasn't one to force things, like some girls. If they were engaged—married even—

At the party. The usual greetings—"Hello, there, old dear. Going to give Papa a dance?" That from Billy Horter, fat and good and stupid. "Look, here's Ella and Ted—and Ella's disguised as a lemon!" The new yellow dress!

Ella put her cape in on the guest-room bed, added a bit more powder, ran a comb through her hair. She was awfully glad she had had her hair bobbed. She meant always to keep it that way. She smiled at her face in the mirror before she ran downstairs.

Margery Holloway had arrived the day before. Ella hadn't met her. She smiled and spoke now almost casually. After all, just another visiting girl. More parties, though. That was nice.

Miss Holloway was rather a pretty girl, dark-haired with rather small eyes and a mouth that could be cruel. She wore long earrings and had on rather a formal evening dress—girls in Hunter's Falls didn't wear dresses like that except to the biggest winter dances.

This was July. Miss Holloway was a talky girl, given to hundreds of little unnecessary sentences—bubbling on and on. . . . She tossed her head and looked at you, brightly, her head still on one side. She smiled quickly and got all through with it with unexpected suddenness. Underneath, too, she had a sort of soft motherliness.

"She's just the sort of girl a fellow would fall awfully hard for, for a while," Ella thought. "He'd get over it, maybe, but if he did fall, she'd get him before he could get away." Still, Ted caught on to girls' tricks. He and she would laugh over the visiting girl on the way home.

Graham's Orchestra—three pieces—furnished the music. There was ice-cream and cake and punch with just a bit of a kick to it. A nice party—girls in new dresses—light summer colors—the big sun porch to dance in.

Ella noticed Ted—and noticed him again. Of course not! Her boy! How silly! Of course he was nice to a visiting girl. Hadn't she always wanted him to be? A girl like Margery Holloway!

Ella danced with all of the men, quite as she always did. Was it imagination—was Ted paying less attention to her? Of course not! There he was, dancing with Florence Martin. Surely that was just a good deed! Few enough men danced with Florence. Yes—there he was—with the visiting girl. Why bother? Her boy!

The evening was over. Ella told Freda good-bye—told them all good-bye—she'd telephone Freda about the bridge party in the morning—yes—it had been a wonderful evening—awfully jolly to see everyone—glad the Ellisons were back in town . . .

They took Amy and Paul home in their car, dropping them at Amy's house. That took up most of the drive. Ella had been sitting in the back seat with Amy. She climbed in front with Ted, now.

"Nice party, wasn't it?" she said.

"Yes," agreed Ted. He didn't talk much when he was driving.

"Did you like Miss Holloway?"

"Seemed like a nice girl."

"I thought she was silly," said Ella. "Didn't you notice how she bumbled on about things—and that cute little mother-way with her—I thought she'd start sewing loose buttons on before the evening was over."

"Why, Ella," said Ted, "I never heard you talk so catty before. It doesn't seem to me you are being fair to Miss Holloway. After all, you just met her, you know."

"Oh," said Ella, and "Oh, of course," and a minute later, "Oh," again. Catty to Miss Holloway!

She talked on about nothing at all—to eat up the time until she was home. She said good-night as casually as she could. He'd get over it, of course. Wasn't he Ted—who was always being nice to her, taking her places—her boy!

### III

SHE cried a little bit before she went to sleep. It wasn't much of a hurt, though. By morning, when she woke up, she had convinced herself—it's so easy to be convinced—that she had imagined most of it. Maybe she had been catty! Ted was awfully fair about these things, really. He wasn't mean or gossipy like some men.

She waited all morning for the telephone to ring. It did ring several times and for her, too. It wasn't Ted. Still, he didn't ring every day—not every morning, anyhow.

She dressed, early in the afternoon and took a book out to the hammock on the front porch. In case Ted should drive by. . . . He did, sometimes. He didn't pass. She read page after page before she realized that she didn't know—hadn't known for minutes—what she was reading about. She put the book down, got some women's magazines and looked through them, paying too close attention to the styles and the cooking recipes. She didn't have to think about Ted!

At six the telephone rang. It was Ted. Her heart beat absurdly. Of course everything was all right.

"Some of us are going out to the Park to dance," said Ted. "Laurence Phillips just phoned me about it—sort of for Freda and her guest. Be ready at half-past eight?"

Of course Ella could be ready at half-past eight—at any time.

When she sat down to the evening meal, Ella realized that she had hardly eaten a bite all day. To think she'd worry like that over nothing at all—because of one thing Ted had said to her!

She wore her white dress. They took Florence and Albert in the car. The music would be good at the Park—it was sort of a stunt, too, because there was really an awfully ordinary crowd there—usually their set didn't go at all.

Garish lights, colored summer dresses, jazz music, a smooth, open-air dance hall, with curious people standing, half in shadow at the outer railings, watching. Strange couples doing strange steps—Ella nodded to a half dozen people—one girl she had gone to grammar school with—a boy who had once delivered the groceries. In a corner of the hall their crowd. Dances . . .

It was true. Ted liked Margery Holloway. It wasn't imagination, now. He laughed at everything she said, made little remarks so that she would tilt her head at him, fell for every obvious bit of her line. Ella wanted to say out loud, "Don't you see she's pulling a strong line? Don't you see how silly she is?" Ella didn't say anything. She danced with Ted, with the others. She felt suddenly like wood, all through. She wondered if she were even keeping time to the music. She heard herself, almost as if she were standing at one side, making appropriate answers to questions.

She wasn't catty on the way home, now. She knew better. She wouldn't have been, in the first place, if she had known.

She took a book to bed with her. She was glad Helen was married. Helen and she had shared the bedroom together until a year ago. Helen would have made her put out the light.

She wasn't reading, really. She knew that. Yet she knew if she did put out the light she couldn't go to sleep. It was easier to pretend to read, instead. She didn't think so steadily, then. Funny, how she knew how it felt to feel like this—she had never felt like this, had always been so sure about Ted. Half asleep, she did put out the light, finally. She wiped her eyes in the darkness. Ted . . . "little heart face . . . you *sweet* thing . . . you're very nice, yourself . . ." a dozen little sentences. Ted wasn't given to demonstrations.

She woke up in the morning to find that she must have been crying in her sleep. Her pillow was wet. How silly! Ted would get over it! Of course! Hadn't he liked that Locker girl who had visited the Taylors last year? She hadn't acted like this, then. Margery Holloway wouldn't stay forever—not more than a few weeks—after that . . . of course. Why, Ted was terribly fond of her—he had said that. They were engaged—nearly. He hadn't said that he loved her—not those words, actually. . . .

Suddenly, the days began to lengthen out. Their minutes flattened into hours. No longer were mornings just pleasant parts of the day, meant to waste or to help a bit around the house, punctuated with telephone calls or sudden automobile rides. Mornings were long waitings for the telephone to ring, afternoons were longer times of waiting . . . evenings . . . evenings were full of ghosts . . . Ted had been to call at the Fultons—without her. He could have gone to see Bob. Of course. Not likely. He never went there. Ernest Volmer had told her by accident . . . funny how things always got back. Ted and Margery Holloway—alone. Had they sat—close together? Had Margery Holloway let—made—Ted kiss her? She was a girl who could do that. Pretty and cute, too. Hard, if she wanted to be. Knew things. Did she care about Ted—the way Ella cared?

Ted . . . Ted . . . Ted . . . Days, then, days of waiting for telephone calls, of hearing little things, of watching, of



trying not to watch. Nights of lying awake, of picturing Ted and Margery. . . . "Oh, God, this can't go on . . . make Ted love me more . . . make me love Ted less" . . . maybe it wasn't real . . . Margery would go away. . . .

Days. . . . Then a call from Ted. It began pleasantly enough. Ella had put on a fresh blue dress and tied a band around her hair. It was all right. Of course. Ted had telephoned and asked to call to tell her it was all right! Wasn't that it? She told herself that it was all the while she was dressing. How thin her face was getting. She had lost ten pounds. Ted? Absurd! She'd lost because it was July—August nearly—and warm. Didn't she always lose weight in summer?

They sat on the porch, she in the hammock, Ted in the wicker chair near her. How often they'd sat this way—long hours of talks about themselves—their plans. Then, Ted:

"I . . . well, Ella . . . I wanted to talk to you . . . you and I have always been, well, real pals. I want you to know I'll always appreciate it. But I think it's a good thing, growing up together like this, that we realize before it's too late that we really—well—were just good friends, you know. There's a lot of unhappiness when couples drift on . . . it seems to be. . . ."

Incoherent—obvious—rambling. "I want you to know first of all . . . I want you and Margery to be great friends . . . I've told her what great friends we've always been . . . when you get to know her . . . never thought anything like this . . . ."

"Yes," said Ella, and "yes, of course."

It was over, finally.

"What am I going to do tomorrow—the next day—all of my life . . . ?" sobbed Ella. This was after she had gone to bed. Ted didn't know. That was something.

Parties. Ted and Margery. A great pretense of not caring. Funniest of all—folks didn't know she cared—hadn't guessed. No one laughed at her, even. George Wallace started taking her to

parties. Nice George. "I've never had a chance at you before, but now that Ted is out of the way . . . my, but we dance perfectly together . . . did you know that your hair is the loveliest, softest stuff . . . ." Nice George. What did he matter . . . anyone matter! Days ahead. Twenty-two . . . she'd probably live to be fifty—or eighty even . . . there was Grandma Deming—seventy-three, now.

## IV

LOIS TUCKER of Mercer City, who was a sort of third cousin and had visited Ella the year before, wrote her a long, scrawly letter. There was an invitation concealed between the tenth and fourteenth pages, the rest of the letter being given over to a new heart affair of Miss Tucker.

"What does Lois say?" asked Ella's mother and then, "Why don't you visit her, dear? The change would do you a lot of good. You look pale. You've got your three nice dresses and Miss Delaney could make you a thin silk . . . you'll have to get a new cape, anyhow, even if you stayed at home . . . ."

A week, then, of Miss Delaney, with pins in her mouth, kneeling on the floor fitting dresses. A pink dress, another blue one, a gray with little rosebuds. Nice dresses! What did they matter? What did life matter. Ted . . . Ted . . . Ted . . .

Hats—one with a round brim, for the new orange sweater—Ella looked nice in sport things—a big black hat with rosebuds—new earrings—she'd wear earrings, too . . . have a lot of little tricks . . . toss her head . . . why not . . . Ted . . . Ted . . .

Mercer City *The Mercer City Tribune*:

Miss Lois Tucker of Locust Street has as her guest her cousin, Miss Ella Deming of Hunter's Falls. A number of social activities are being planned for the attractive young visitor.

Ella was a Visiting Girl! She met new girls and chatted with them. She met new men and tossed her head.

"Some of us are going out to the Park to dance," said Ted. "Laurence Phillips just phoned me about it—sort of for Freda and her guest. Be ready at half-past eight?"

Of course Ella could be ready at half-past eight—at any time.

When she sat down to the evening meal, Ella realized that she had hardly eaten a bite all day. To think she'd worry like that over nothing at all—because of one thing Ted had said to her!

She wore her white dress. They took Florence and Albert in the car. The music would be good at the Park—it was sort of a stunt, too, because there was really an awfully ordinary crowd there—usually their set didn't go at all.

Garish lights, colored summer dresses, jazz music, a smooth, open-air dance hall, with curious people standing, half in shadow at the outer railings, watching. Strange couples doing strange steps—Ella nodded to a half dozen people—one girl she had gone to grammar school with—a boy who had once delivered the groceries. In a corner of the hall their crowd. Dances . . .

It was true. Ted liked Margery Holloway. It wasn't imagination, now. He laughed at everything she said, made little remarks so that she would tilt her head at him, fell for every obvious bit of her line. Ella wanted to say out loud, "Don't you see she's pulling a strong line? Don't you see how silly she is?" Ella didn't say anything. She danced with Ted, with the others. She felt suddenly like wood, all through. She wondered if she were even keeping time to the music. She heard herself, almost as if she were standing at one side, making appropriate answers to questions.

She wasn't catty on the way home, now. She knew better. She wouldn't have been, in the first place, if she had known.

She took a book to bed with her. She was glad Helen was married. Helen and she had shared the bedroom together until a year ago. Helen would have made her put out the light.

She wasn't reading, really. She knew that. Yet she knew if she did put out the light she couldn't go to sleep. It was easier to pretend to read, instead. She didn't think so steadily, then. Funny, how she knew how it felt to feel like this—she had never felt like this, had always been so sure about Ted. Half asleep, she did put out the light, finally. She wiped her eyes in the darkness. Ted . . . "little heart face . . . you *sweet* thing . . . you're very nice, yourself . . ." a dozen little sentences. Ted wasn't given to demonstrations.

She woke up in the morning to find that she must have been crying in her sleep. Her pillow was wet. How silly! Ted would get over it! Of course! Hadn't he liked that Locker girl who had visited the Taylors last year? She hadn't acted like this, then. Margery Holloway wouldn't stay forever—not more than a few weeks—after that . . . of course. Why. Ted was terribly fond of her—he had said that. They were engaged—nearly. He hadn't said that he loved her—not those words, actually. . . .

Suddenly, the days began to lengthen out. Their minutes flattened into hours. No longer were mornings just pleasant parts of the day, meant to waste or to help a bit around the house, punctuated with telephone calls or sudden automobile rides. Mornings were long waitings for the telephone to ring, afternoons were longer times of waiting . . . evenings . . . evenings were full of ghosts . . . Ted had been to call at the Fultons—without her. He could have gone to see Bob. Of course. Not likely. He never went there. Ernest Volmer had told her by accident . . . funny how things always got back. Ted and Margery Holloway—alone. Had they sat—close together? Had Margery Holloway let—made—Ted kiss her? She was a girl who could do that. Pretty and cute, too. Hard, if she wanted to be. Knew things. Did she care about Ted—the way Ella cared?

Ted . . . Ted . . . Ted. . . . Days, then, days of waiting for telephone calls, of hearing little things, of watching, of

trying not to watch. Nights of lying awake, of picturing Ted and Margery. . . . "Oh, God, this can't go on . . . make Ted love me more . . . make me love Ted less" . . . maybe it wasn't real . . . Margery would go away. . . .

Days. . . . Then a call from Ted. It began pleasantly enough. Ella had put on a fresh blue dress and tied a band around her hair. It was all right. Of course. Ted had telephoned and asked to call to tell her it was all right! Wasn't that it? She told herself that it was all the while she was dressing. How thin her face was getting. She had lost ten pounds. Ted? Absurd! She'd lost because it was July—August nearly—and warm. Didn't she always lose weight in summer?

They sat on the porch, she in the hammock, Ted in the wicker chair near her. How often they'd sat this way—long hours of talks about themselves—their plans. Then, Ted:

"I . . . well, Ella . . . I wanted to talk to you . . . you and I have always been, well, real pals. I want you to know I'll always appreciate it. But I think it's a good thing, growing up together like this, that we realize before it's too late that we really—well—were just good friends, you know. There's a lot of unhappiness when couples drift on . . . it seems to be. . . ."

Incoherent—obvious—rambling. "I want you to know first of all . . . I want you and Margery to be great friends . . . I've told her what great friends we've always been . . . when you get to know her . . . never thought anything like this . . . ."

"Yes," said Ella, and "yes, of course."

It was over, finally.

"What am I going to do tomorrow—the next day—all of my life . . . ?" sobbed Ella. This was after she had gone to bed. Ted didn't know. That was something.

Parties. Ted and Margery. A great pretense of not caring. Funniest of all—folks didn't know she cared—hadn't guessed. No one laughed at her, even. George Wallace started taking her to

parties. Nice George. "I've never had a chance at you before, but now that Ted is out of the way . . . my, but we dance perfectly together . . . did you know that your hair is the loveliest, softest stuff . . . ." Nice George. What did he matter . . . anyone matter! Days ahead. Twenty-two . . . she'd probably live to be fifty—or eighty even . . . there was Grandma Deming—seventy-three, now.

## IV

LOIS TUCKER of Mercer City, who was a sort of third cousin and had visited Ella the year before, wrote her a long, scrawly letter. There was an invitation concealed between the tenth and fourteenth pages, the rest of the letter being given over to a new heart affair of Miss Tucker.

"What does Lois say?" asked Ella's mother and then, "Why don't you visit her, dear? The change would do you a lot of good. You look pale. You've got your three nice dresses and Miss Delaney could make you a thin silk . . . you'll have to get a new cape, anyhow, even if you stayed at home . . . ."

A week, then, of Miss Delaney, with pins in her mouth, kneeling on the floor fitting dresses. A pink dress, another blue one, a gray with little rosebuds. Nice dresses! What did they matter? What did life matter. Ted . . . Ted . . . Ted . . .

Hats—one with a round brim, for the new orange sweater—Ella looked nice in sport things—a big black hat with rosebuds—new earrings—she'd wear earrings, too . . . have a lot of little tricks . . . toss her head . . . why not . . . Ted . . . Ted . . .

Mercer City The Mercer City *Tribune*:

Miss Lois Tucker of Locust Street has as her guest her cousin, Miss Ella Deming of Hunter's Falls. A number of social activities are being planned for the attractive young visitor.

Ella was a Visiting Girl! She met new girls and chatted with them. She met new men and tossed her head.

What did they matter? Still, she had to go on living. Twenty-two is young . . . she'd never care for anyone else . . . never be happy again . . . still, you've got to do something.

Out of the crowd, out of the haze of new people, of longing for Ted, of thinking of Ted, of unrest, suddenly there was Keith Forrest—Keith Forrest's eyes. They were blue eyes, deep and soft and gentle. Ella wondered how she happened to notice them—to notice Keith either—she, who'd never care for anyone, anything again. They were nice eyes, kind and interesting. So was Keith. Not as tall as Ted—his hair was lighter, just a bit, there was a slight wave in it. Not Ted's hair—his dear hair—Ted's eyes . . . Still, you've got to talk with someone.

Keith called. He had a nice car—a newer car than Ted's. Ted's dear old car. . . . Keith had pleasant, new ways.

"Keith Forrest is just about the nicest boy in town," Lois said and Mrs. Tucker, "My dear, it isn't often that Keith Forrest pays attention to a visiting girl."

What did it matter? Still, Keith was rather a dear. Not like Ted—nobody could be. Still—Ted was gone. . . . Ted . . .

Letters from home—from Ella's mother—from the girls she went with . . . mentionings of Ted . . . long hours of thinking, of pain, after the letters came, dull hours, then, of not thinking at all . . .

A visiting girl is always popular unless something is decidedly the matter with her. Ella was "one of the most popular young women who have ever visited our city," according to the *Mercer City Tribune*. Bridge parties and luncheons and dinner and dances, trips to the movies and to the natatorium—Hunter's Falls didn't have a natatorium—and Ella was learning to swim. She was glad her clothes were nice—quite as nice as any of the girls she met. She was glad she knew how to talk to people—to men, even. Wouldn't it be awful to be an unpopular visiting girl—

awful for your hostess, that is? Of course, when your heart is broken . . .

What a nice town Mercer City was! Borckden Gardens was the dearest sort of a new "division" with the most charming little Dutch colonial cottages. Lois and her young man—they were engaged, now—were going to buy a cottage and get married in the Fall. They'd picked out the cottage. A darling—with a little fireplace in the living-room and shelves for books on each side. Of course—for Lois—Ella knew her own life was practically over . . . she'd have to explain to Lois, now that she could talk about it.

It was after a party. Lois had already told her young man good-bye and had gone into the house and up to her room. Ella and Keith were standing on the wide Tucker porch. Honeysuckles were still in bloom and fragrant. Honeysuckles—there had been roses on her porch at home, in June . . .

"I—I don't know," said Keith, "if you could care for me . . ."

They swayed toward each other. Ella never quite knew how it happened. Keith was kissing her. She felt his lips on hers—soft, pleasant. She closed her eyes. A curious thrill went through her—a lovely thrill.

"Keith," she said, "Keith."

Her hand went around his shoulder. How dear he was . . . dear . . . and gentle . . . Keith . . .

SHE knocked at Lois's door to tell her, later.

"We're going to announce it right away," she said, "and could you stand it if we bought one of the new houses right near yours? . . . Isn't that perfectly lovely? . . . I just love Mercer City . . . and it's so near home . . . I could have the girls from home come up here to visit me . . ."

She giggled.

"Now what are you thinking of?" asked Lois.

"Oh, just something a fellow I used to go with said. You remember the fellow—Ted Burrows—you met him when you were visiting me. He talked



like newspaper headlines to be funny. After a visiting girl came to town and got engaged to one of the home boys he used to say 'Visiting Girl Captures Prize'—things like that. And, after all his smart talk, a visiting girl came to Hunters' Falls and picked him off just as easy as anything. They're engaged now. And here I am, a Visiting Girl, getting engaged, too. Funny . . ."

Would she always remember things

like that? Ted . . . "little heart face" . . . "you *sweet* thing" . . . life had stopped . . . gone out . . . those horrible days . . . and now life stretched ahead again . . . Keith . . . Why Keith had said, "I'm loving you an awful lot tonight." Things Keith said—gentle things—lovely things—Keith's kisses . . . after all . . .

Ted, oh Ted, dear Ted. Ted . . . Keith . . .



## In Defense of Marriage

*By John Torcross*

**A**N unhappy error committed so often in the matter of married life, is one based largely on the belief that once the gilt of love peels off—let us say at any point from two to five years after marriage—the couple will enter into a never-ceasing series of quarrels, bickerings, and wranglings. This is not so. On the contrary, there is far more quarreling during the throes of love-making, induced by the endless misgivings and petty jealousies that are con-

stantly arising between the lover and his loved one. Neither is sure of the other; indeed, the two are hardly sure of themselves, and until the conquest is ultimately achieved there is no ease, no actual peace.

Free from such emotional worries and cares, the husband and wife must necessarily view matters in a much more lenient light, forgive the shortcomings of the other, and discard what meannesses they may have nourished in the past.



**T**HE only man who doesn't prove that he is a fool at least forty times a day is the deaf-and-dumb man—and he always looks it.



**A** MAN often wonders how he came to be married. He never finds out. His wife is afraid to tell him



**W**HENEVER a man falls in love, it is a sign that some nice girl has got tired of some other fellow.



# Bruff

*By Jay Jarrod*

**E**VERY time I ever encountered Bruff, he was sure to have just witnessed the most astonishing incident. "Not a minute ago," he would tell me, "I saw an elephant taking a drive in a taxi-cab." Another time it would be an aged man walking up the street on his hands, or a horse smoking a cigar, or a small child with a long white beard, or a woman with pea-green hair, or a mosquito weighing almost a pound, or a dwarf the size of a quart bottle, or a cat that could whistle. There was literally no limit to what he had just seen. The curious part of it all was that one might be in Bruff's company for hours on end without a single unusual occurrence taking place. The wonders invariably happened when he was alone.

One day, as I reclined in the club window nursing along my seventh sample of The Finest on the Market and dwelling upon those delights enhanced by the Prohibition Amendment, Bruff greeted me with a leer. It was evident that he, too, had been imbibing.

"Just seen most 'mazing thing," he chuckled, "and right in club, too. Right in billiard room. Moose's head, over fireplace, making faces."

This was too much, and I told him so.

"Bruff," I said, filling my glass to the brim from the well-depleted flask, "for years I've listened to your preposterous fabrications, but don't think for a minute I ever believed a word of it. Your nonsense amused me; I found your flimflam diverting; but now you go too far. The moose's head making faces, indeed! Bruff, I frankly don't believe a thing you say. Your story is sheer, unadulterated twaddle!" And I tossed off my drink in one swallow. Then, through a sort of haze, I heard Bruff protesting.

"I tell you it's the truth!" he cried indignantly. "You must believe me. Come, I'll show you!"

The audacity of the fellow was beyond conception. Surely he must have gone mad, I thought, as I followed him into the hall and somewhat uncertainly entered the billiard room. I couldn't help thinking how absurd Bruff looked. Then I glanced in the direction of the moose's head. For a moment I swayed and clutched at a chair to keep from falling. Bruff had been perfectly right. The moose was winking evilly, and grinning from ear to ear.



# Values

*By John C. Cavendish*

## I

**A**BANDONING the usual methods of criticism, the value of any achievement in the only two significant fields of human endeavor, science and art, may often be estimated shrewdly by observing the attitude of the worker to the reception of his work. If he complain that he has not received a cash compensation equal to the value of his accomplishment, then we may assume that that accomplishment is of the lesser order. The man who has attained to an authentically great achievement in science or art instinctively recognizes that no compensation in money will ever be commensurate with the value of his work. Imagine Michael Faraday whimpering because his laws of electro-magnetic induction brought him less monetary profit than somebody's invention of a new lemon-squeezer! Or Joseph Conrad envious of the earnings of Fannie Hurst! A new symphony in C sharp minor would never bring the price of one popular jazz-piece. This is to say that the great achievement is priceless—it transcends all customary values.

## II

**T**HE hero and the heroic always hold a high place in popular esteem, but the value set upon the hero is placed less upon the simple courage of his act than upon the drama that goes hand in hand with his accomplishment. Courage alone does not, in the popular sense, make a sig-

nificant hero; nor does the commission of an heroic act. That act, to be impressively heroic, must be done under circumstances that are unique and dramatic. If the simple performance of a courageous deed sufficed to make a hero, then many a person submitting himself to the surgeon's scalpel in a major operation deserves the immortality of heroes, and any steeplejack is a hero when he perilously regilds the weathercock above the First Baptist Church. The steeplejack's job requires courage, but it lacks the two indispensable qualities of the heroic—unique occasion and, above all, impressive drama. The stuff of heroes is cheap enough—but the uniquely dramatic opportunity . . . that is rare.

## III

It is curious to observe how antagonistic are certain human qualities held in high esteem. For instance, it is virtually impossible for a man to exhibit at one and the same time the two lauded attributes of courage and sagacity. Wisdom involves the measuring instinct, the taking thought, the summing up, the counting of costs, while, on the other hand, a transaction in courage involves the gambler's play with unforeseen outcomes. Thus, courage and sagacity are ever opposed; it is only the cunning that are wise.

## IV

**S**PEAKING of the sciences, the value popularly placed upon the new science

of ethnology is far greater than its deserts. Even when ethnology rises above the level of its Nordic blond quackery, it still remains primitive. When will the savants go beyond such obvious and elementary classifications as facial contours, color of hair, pigmentation of skin and cranial indices? When will they begin inexorably to classify men on the basis of their intellectual capacities—their mental habits, faiths and prejudices? In other words, when will they undertake the truly significant task of differentiating the mental species of men? Until this work is seriously begun, ethnology will remain the playground of quacks, pedants and the credulous. But when the time comes, the ethnologists will make it apparent, by means of rigid scientific demonstration, that in spite of a certain similarity in coloring, there is as much difference between a go-getter American Babbitt, and, let us say, Gustave Flaubert, as there is between a sparrow and a swan.

## V

THE true value of a work of art lies not in its materials but in the perfection of its form. For this reason no artist must be limited in his choice of materials. He must be given the

same broad liberty accorded without demur by all decently pious men to the Lord God patiently to fashion a perfect louse or a perfect mammal. Those who deny to art the right of all materials, of every subject, fatuously posture themselves as censors of the creative impulse—which, to say the least, is impious. The artist assumes the divine right of untrammelled creation. His sole limitation is form. His materials, bitter and sweet, are but the various rays wherewith he illumines the chosen form.

## VI

CONTEMPT is to be valued only as a weapon against a seemingly superior antagonist. To show contempt to the weaker and the inferior is to pervert this capacity. To inferiors one should exhibit only the God-like gesture of compassion—or indifference. But contempt—that must remain a stoic virtue, a cynical weapon wherewith to ward the thrust of an inscrutable fate. The man assailed by an antagonist better armed than himself remains inferior until he summons contempt. Through contempt he raises himself to an equality with any foe.



## October

*By Jane Draper*

I THINK my heart once uttered cries,  
I have forgotten the pain,  
But I know that there were sudden skies  
And blossoms after rain.

I know that beauty was aflame  
And caught me in its sweep.  
Afterward the silence came  
And quiet still as sleep.

Now I know that leaves are old,  
Where splendor was is grief;  
Now I know that I grow cold  
With every yellowed leaf.



# The Seminars of the Villages

*By Oscar Lewis*

## I

SOME day one of our national historians, more astute than the average, is going to pause in his musty job of raking over the bones of our dead institutions—the race-tracks, the medicine shows, the Bryan clubs, the grocery-store bars—and devote a few regretful paragraphs to the passing of the livery stable.

They will be worth reading. The tribute, though belated, will be a deserved one. Of all our American cultural institutions, the livery stable stands most in need of a sympathetic interpreter. It has been the most reviled, the least understood and, once it was gone, the quickest forgotten of all the forces working toward the enhancement of the native intelligence. Considering its importance, this continued neglect of the livery stable and all it stood for, all it promised, is simply astounding. The professional custodians of the national culture have given it no recognition whatever. The catalogues of learned publications issued by the various university presses contain no reference to it; no aspiring candidate for a Ph.D., no professor looking for a prop to bolster up his reputation for scholarship, has turned his attention to this significant factor in American life. One almost suspects a conspiracy of silence on the part of the learned.

Because of this lack of official sanction, it is difficult in considering the educative value of these vanished institutions to free the mind of certain

inherited prejudices that continue to cling about them. The tradition that livery stables were sinister establishments, harboring nameless and questionable practices and frequented by persons who were in close alliance with the devil, has persisted to this day. This popular picture of the livery stable group as depraved creatures who spent their time swapping immoral stories, speaking lightly and disrespectfully of women, and reading sizzling translations from the French, has blinded the eyes even of the intelligent to their real function, their real worth. For the livery stable was no mere gathering place of village loafers. It was something vastly more important.

Let us consider for a moment the facts. To the normal mind, the American village of a generation ago offered a picture of unrelieved barrenness. The native, turning from his work, which he probably despised, and setting out hopefully in quest of amusement, found that what might be called organized avenues of entertainment were confined to two or three groups. In some towns there were but two, for aside from the saloons and the illicit dens that composed the red light districts, the only largely patronized organizations devoted to recreation and the social contacts were those maintained by the various churches.

While both these forces were of undoubted value, educationally and culturally to the inhabitants, neither exerted more than a fraction of the influence of which it was capable.

This was a great shame. The constant and senseless warfare that always existed between the two factions, the bitterness of the hatred engendered, precluded the possibility of any permanent good ever coming from either. This fight, waged with almost incredible fury, went on in hundreds of American towns. It was a campaign that knew no quarter, a series of engagements in which the soldiers abandoned alike the rules of mercy and of self-respect. It was as cruel as a Modoc's campaign, as devoid of chivalry as a religious war. A senseless and wasteful struggle, retarding for generations the logical development of the American town. For had those two factions not so largely spent their forces contending with one another, the strength of their influence might have been wholly directed into beneficial channels and many shining pages added to the history of the land.

We must then, in considering the case of the American town, count out the saloon crowd and the church crowd. It is clear that from neither could anything of importance come. The very bitterness of the feelings which possessed the combatants prevented the development of any of those qualities of repose, of contemplation, of intellectual scepticism and open-eyed, unprejudiced observation of life which must be the point of departure for any even slight ascent toward a civilized state. It is impossible to picture such beneficial results coming from the two sources I have named. As well expect a great scientist to be developed in some Mexican band of professional cutthroats, a philosopher in an American state university. No community, no institution, swayed by hatred and fear, by ignoble passion and prejudice, can exist without bringing about the demoralization and eventual descent to complete savagery of everyone connected with it.

In the search for some ray of hope then, for some nascent spark from

which the fires of a true culture might in time have been kindled, we must examine the less widely patronized resorts to which the natives wandered during their hours of recreation.

A moment's reflection will disclose the fact that such places were surprisingly few in number and that most of them were utterly without value. The Odd Fellows and the Knights of Pythias, the poolrooms and the corner drug stores, the railroad station and the W. C. T. U. about exhausts the list. The theatre when it was represented at all, was confined to the occasional visits of medicine shows and wandering stock companies. The plays they presented, very carefully selected for their extreme puerility, were yet invariably beyond the intelligence of the audiences and were looked on with suspicion. There was, of course, no music, no art, no literature; in all the towns throughout the country there was nothing that might send the faintest current of life through the paralyzed aesthetic senses of the wretched inhabitants. The state of the average American town a quarter century ago, in short, was only slightly less deplorable than it is today.

It was less deplorable because of the livery stables. Here was one element, feeble, blundering, frequently misdirected, that yet was founded on sound principles, and which might well, had it continued to exist, been the means of lifting American village life to a considerably higher plane.

## II

LET us examine more closely, then, this vanished hope of the nation; let us step from the barren waste of the town to that dubious but life-supporting oasis, its livery stable.

Enter it reverently, for here at once, at the very threshold of its arched brick driveway, one grows aware of a change. There was about

the very feel of the place, its spaciousness, the coolness of its dim, vaulted ceiling, the tranquillizing influence of its musty, unforgettable odor—an odor compounded of horses and hay, of manure and harness-oil and mouldy straw—that removed one bodily to a new world. It was a contemplative and serene world, cut off from the raw passions of the town, its feuds and hysteria, its bawdy, cutthroat commercialism.

It is difficult to realize the significance, the stupendous importance of such a spot existing, calm and shrinelike, in the midst of the confusion, the chaotic jumble of ignorance and passion that constituted the normal American village of the time.

None could step from the hard brightness of the street into that softened interior without leaving some of the grossness of the town behind and without presently finding his senses seduced to civilized impulses by the tranquillizing atmosphere of the place.

I do not mean that the village livery stable made a civilized human being out of every person who entered it. The vast majority of the inhabitants were, of course, incapable of civilization, and when the subtle allurements of the place began to work upon these, instilling tranquillity, mildness, a tolerant scepticism into their minds and hearts, the average citizen felt that his morals were being corrupted and he fled in panic. One such experience was enough for the normal citizen; for weeks thereafter he passed the stable from the opposite side of the street, casting suspicious glances within and denouncing it to his friends as an evil place that had best be avoided by God-fearing men. Thus grew up the tradition, which exists to this day, that livery stables were disreputable places from which nothing but evil could come; not to be entered without elaborate precautions against

the danger of moral pollution.

The livery stable, then, held no allurements for the vast majority of the town's inhabitants. By a happy and convenient circumstance it rejected automatically all those who were unfit to participate in its benefits.

But what of those it retained, of those who casually entering the place, found themselves not repelled by the magic it presently began to work upon them, but interested and charmed by this alien experience? It was from such as these, persons to whom a civilized impulse was an intriguing curiosity, to be encouraged and investigated rather than fled from, that the livery stable group always was composed. In the nature of things the group never was large, and it seldom numbered any of the substantial citizens of the community. It was not the social elite of the town that gathered of an evening on the squeaky chairs inside the doorway; it was a more important group. Twenty-five years ago in any town, on any night, one had but to hunt out the livery stable and step inside to find a group that, whatever its number, comprised ninety-five per cent of the civilizable inhabitants of the town. They were the authentic candidates for culture, the intellectual possibilities of the villages.

### III

LET me try to make clear just why this was so. The livery stable group existed, as all groups exist, because man by nature chooses the environment that best suits his temperament. By instinct he turns toward the spot, or toward the group of individuals which is likely to give him the best show. What sort of show, then, did the livery stable offer its patrons?

It offered them, for one thing, a place of refuge in which to practise the difficult art of unprejudiced ob-

servation. For the livery stable group had no gods and, more important, no belief in the existence of evil as a quality belonging definitely and inherently to anything or anybody. Its habitues regarded the life of the town merely as an interesting spectacle, as a pageant to be observed as a whole, all parts of which were equally worthy of attention, of curiosity and wonder. If its members preferred the Rabelaisian tales of a visiting drummer to the jokes in the local paper, it was because the former were more genuinely humorous; if they refused to believe that there were but two kinds of women their conclusions were based on evidence which they considered sufficient. They approached a question with open minds and they decided it by the unique method of weighing the evidence.

And because of this, the livery stable offered them tolerance. Standing between the church crowd on one side and the grosser elements of the

town on the other, it yet managed to remain distinct from both; the passions that shook the two opposing elements, the insults and recriminations that were hurled back and forth passed it by. From the shelter of their tranquil haven, the livery stable group watched that matchless bombardment of abuse with the interested, slightly sceptical gaze of unprejudiced onlookers.

It is important that I make it clear that these groups were without prejudice. They delighted in the battle going on about them, but it was a delight without rancor; their joy at the obscenities that were committed on both sides was a purely intellectual joy and free from any taint of malice.

They were, in short, not actors but observers and interpreters. There can be no civilization without such as these. Our towns and villages contained few enough of them then. Today they contain none.



## About the Sunrise

*By Gamel Woolsey*

IT was about the sunrise  
The gray skies touched the tree;  
My dreams went by on horseback,  
Laughing scornfully.

I had no thing to give them  
That I could make them stay,  
But an empty bed, and waking eyes,  
And so they went their way.

It was about the sunrise  
This last dream came to me—  
My dreams went by on horseback  
Laughing scornfully.





# American Insitutions

v

## A Business Office

*By Charles G. Shaw*

**T**ELEPHONES are ringing, electric fans are buzzing, and typewriters click above an undercurrent of chatter of mortgages, insurance rates, tax assessments, and property values. It is the office of Henry Keys, Inc., real estate and insurance, as is designated by the great gilt letters on the door paneled in opaque glass. Mr. Keys is a very busy man.

The space is divided into two sections—a main, or outer, office and a private one. Let us, first, note the main office. It is approximately thirty-two feet in length by nineteen in width. Its ceiling is calcimined, and its walls are painted cream color and decorated with photographs of town and country dwellings, sketches of proposed apartment houses, lithographs of office buildings, and framed tax department licenses. A thin green carpet covers the floor and, in one corner, stand a hat-rack and a bag of golf sticks. A low wooden railing encompasses the entrance, the theory of which is that it produces an impression of importance, a touch of privacy, and, as we await without this barrier, an ungainly youth of eighteen falteringly inquires the purport of our quest. We wish to see Mr. Keys? Very sorry, but Mr. Keys is in conference. What was it about? Apartments? Mr. Harbison handles the apartments.

Mr. Harbison's desk is on the right of the room, and his name, in characters stamped on a metal placard, embellishes it. He is a slim young man with a small blond moustache and a

bronchial cough. A gray homespun suit adorns his figure, and a pair of heavy-soled tan shoes garnish his pedal extremities; his tie is purple and knitted. Yes, there are plenty of apartments, though, of course, the really choice ones are going fast. No, rents are not likely to drop for some while. And what part of town was preferred? Was it to be furnished or unfurnished? After a few seconds of meditation, he produces a filing drawer and, with an air of mysterious knowledge, gingerly reviews the card index. Five rooms and two baths, eh? Well, he'd see. Of course, it was an unusual request. There were flocks of six-room apartments, but five—he was afraid it would be difficult. Now, there was something that had just come in that might be what we were looking for. Well, he'd see. Yes, Mr. Keys is still busy.

The desk beyond that of Mr. Harbison is occupied by a heavy-set man of thirty-seven, a Mr. Knowles, who manages the loft and office space department of the concern. He is surrounded by stacks of plans, letters, building statistics, announcements, blue prints, and lease forms. At the moment he is seriously contemplating the purchase of a wire-haired fox terrier. The Boynton Holding and Contracting Company proclaim the completion of an eighteen-story edifice, and present a brochure of plans, values and distinguishing features. He believes that old Wistflint, of Rorabeck, Schmidt and Wistflint,

might be interested in the project. Yes, he'll dictate a letter, at once. Miss Borkman, will you take this down? And Miss Borkman gathers together a collection of paraphernalia, purses her lips, and trips daintily across the room to Mr. Knowles' position of elegance, where she graces a low stool. Miss Borkman is five feet four and a half inches, weighs one hundred and seventeen pounds, might be anywhere from nineteen to twenty-three, uses Guerlain lip rouge, henna d'Oriel, liquid white, "atmosphere" stockings, invisible hairpins, Coty's Vertige, and has never read a line of Gabriel d'Annunzio.

Opposite Mr. Knowles is Mr. Clayburn, who attends to the private residence end of the business. Just now a somewhat sorry situation confronts him. The offer of forty-nine thousand for the little brownstone, American basement, nineteen-foot front has been suddenly withdrawn, and the owner has sailed that morning for Europe, with Mr. Clayburn's own guarantee that the deal was closed. He feels that the dispatch of a cable is, perhaps, the proper mode of action. Mr. Clayburn likewise manages the insurance for the firm. "No, Mr. Keys is engaged, just now," we hear the lanky office boy inform one who has just entered.

Another desk embraces the workbench of Arthur Frisbie, the country property representative. He is, at the moment, endeavoring to persuade old Mrs. Brindlewaite to buy the ramshackle Morrissey place in Glen Valley—the most famous eyesore and white elephant of the entire countryside. The ancient lady is undecided whether she approves of Glen Valley, but appears interested in remodeling the house. Little does ingenuous Mr. Frisbie realize that she will suddenly alter all her plans next week, and decide to pass the remainder of her days in Venice amid memories of her honeymoon. Near

Frisbie is a huge filing cabinet containing circular letters, advertising forms, copies of leases, bills of sale, and folders marked: "Receipts, Reports, Statements." A group of atlases, magazines and maps set off a mahogany table and, next to a large inverted water-bottle in a metal stand, is Miss Pflorm, the mistress of the telephone, who is stationed at a switchboard, and connects calls to the various desks, which are handsomely equipped with telephones and rubber ear devices.

To the rear is the inner office, occupied by Mr. Keys. It contains one highly polished desk, three swivel chairs with black cushions, an enameled wastebasket, a wicker settee, and several wooden receptacles labeled: "Incoming" and "Outgoing." On the desk is a green-shaded lamp, a telephone, ink, pens, blotters, clips, and various books, papers, pamphlets and maps. In addition to the above are: one box of cigars (for clients), another box (for personal use), one-half a bottle of Scotch whiskey, a lady's kid glove, a last week's newspaper, two theatre door-checks, one pint of gin, four glasses of odd sizes, a pair of overshoes, a corkscrew, and a coat-hanger. Mr. Keys is always busy—busy in many ways. He is telephoning, and has been thus occupied for the past twenty-seven minutes. He is in the midst of a most important conversation.

"Certainly it'll be all right," he is saying. "She's in the country with the kids. I'll call her up, and tell her that I've got to stay in town on account of a meeting of the board. Now, you get the girls, and I'll charter a car from O'Rourke's. We'll have cocktails first at my apartment, and then spin out to that new roadhouse—the Sunbonnet Inn—they say it's a knockout—have a bang-up dinner and—"

But we hear no more. Mr. Keys is indeed a very busy man.



# Miss Monkey-Fur

*By Nancy Hoyt*

## I

“**T**HEY order,” said I, glaring at the unappetizing breakfast tray, “this matter better in France.” And with this opostrophe to the Rev. Laurence Sterne, I pushed away the cup of villainous liquid which was supposed to be coffee and frowned at the cold toast.

My feelings at the time were all for a quick departure to Paris, but after I had bathed in the only bathroom the hotel afforded (primitive, but the water was hot) and had finished the *Times* and a picture paper, a faint sunlight broke out and brightened the black and pink chintz of the sitting-room with its weak radiance. The taxis going by my windows gave gentle melodious tootings from their ridiculous rubber horns and going to the window I looked out on the engaging scene of hundreds of well-dressed gentlemen with nothing to do, carefully and seriously pursuing this occupation. The shop at the corner opposite displayed silk pajamas in mauve and lemon, banked up with more solid articles like dressing gowns and woolly sweaters in the same shades. A malacca stick, pale chamois gloves and a blue foulard handkerchief were arrayed in a beautiful group, as if ready for the touch of some exquisite to carry them out into the street. London was, after all, not a bad place to be in, and my sitting-room window at Knox’s was a proscenium box for the frivolous revue of Jermyn Street.

Knox’s Hotel is a strange place.

Small, dingy, quiet and incredibly old-fashioned to be still extant, it has a certain charm and comfort which keeps people returning year after year. The first time I was there, I was four years old, possessed of a white quilted coat and made friends with the large gray cat in the office of the manageress. The cat is gone, so indeed is the quilted coat, but the manageress still sits in her little mahogany and glass den.

You might go to Knox’s for years and seldom encounter the very dashing or the very worldly. If they were that type, Knox’s would bore them to tears. The clientele is composed mainly of young bachelors who live there because it is central, oldish bachelors who are there because the food is good, country squires who come there on a holiday because it is discreet, and elderly ladies there because they always have gone there before when in London. Also there are often American tourists who, hearing the place is dyed-in-the-wool conservative England with no silly modern Americanisms like bathrooms or telephones, are there to get the real English atmosphere, and are annoyed to find fellow tourists off the same boat sojourning at Knox’s for the same reasons. My brother Morris and I stayed there because it was “two or three minutes’ walk to the theatres and principal places of amusement,” as the booklet seductively put it, and partly because habit forced us back to the respectable portals on Jermyn Street.

On our arrival we had looked

around the coffee-room (the name is painted over the door and you can get anything except coffee there) and found the place so entirely the same that even the people, though a new set of individuals, still conformed to the fixed Knox's types.

The place was as usual very quiet, only broken by the sound of refined fingers breaking bits of toast, of a whisky and soda being discreetly poured and other polite noises. An old gentleman murmured to his wife of the profligacy and boorishness of an age which allowed small boys to shout "Beaver" and other rude cries at a retired admiral and go scot free. His beard, small and close cut, had obviously been trimmed and curbed under the effect of these rude cries till it was almost non-existent. You could see the ghostly halo of where the rest of the beard had once been from watching him put his hand up cautiously, as if to feel for it, and then withdraw it suddenly with a surprised expression. Near the elderly couple was a middle-aged man dexterously transferring food and drink to his mouth without once removing his eyes from a folded newspaper propped against a cruet. Two maiden ladies conversed in lowered voices. A pleasant young married couple talked about the horses and dogs they had left for a short visit to town. Tina's puppies were appraised as being a very good lot, particularly the one with the black spot.

There was a sudden sound outside the door.

"At Ciro's at eleven?" said a pleasant voice. "Till then, au revoir." And in walked the lady of the voice. A huge black capeline almost hiding her face, a black coat frock trimmed with monkey fur (not the thin fringy kind, but thick glossy stuff), a sudden jingling as she threw a mesh bag and its trappings of lipstick and cigarette case on the table and then a calm amused look around the room. The waiter leaned over with the wine-

list. She became absorbed and her face was hidden by the hat.

"Who is Miss Monkey-fur? A Russian countess?" said Morris.

"A Russian countess in Knox's!" I answered. "Anyway, she's fearfully attractive."

"If she stays long—" Morris started.

"Oh, all right, all right," I answered peevishly, "I'll try and pick her up. How do you know she'll want to? She looks very poised and self-sufficient to me. But as she is quite the most exciting person that ever came to Knox's, I'll do my best."

This had been the effective entrance on the scene of Miss Monkey-fur.

## II

THE morning being now twelve o'clock, I descended to the entrance floor and wandered into the lounge. This room, a limbo of dusty, sharp-angled palms and back numbers of the *Lady's Pictorial* and the *Graphic*, was empty except for one figure hardly visible from the doorway. The most comfortable chair in the room was drawn up to the small coal fire, and on the fender were placed two small feet, beautifully shod. I stared at the feet, for they were slim, high arched and somehow quite unlike Knox's. Above the patent leather sandals were rose-beige silk stockings, then an impression of chic black frock and monkey fur, and above that a small black cloche very far down over shadowy half-closed eyes.

The lady stretched herself lazily, shifted one slipper and yawned a delicate little yawn. She was extraordinarily like a cat, a smooth, beautiful black cat, warm and cozy and comfortable, and as I like cats and find their aloof selfishness amusing, I moved nearer. Matches stood in a white china stand on a table close by her. Taking out a cigarette from my case I reached over for a match to light it with.



"May I have one?" I said, though they were obviously hotel matches and hence common property.

"Yes, do," she answered, looking up and smiling. Then she pushed forward a box of cigarettes left open on the table and offered me one.

"I meant the matches," I said apologetically, for she seemed to have thought that I contemplated taking one of her cigarettes.

"No, but you must have one of these. They were given to me by a friend and I shall never use them up unless someone helps me. I don't smoke very much, myself."

It was, in fact, a magnificent box of cigarettes. A large, low, flat box, with an assortment of every size and kind, as chocolates are sometimes arranged. There were little pasteboard compartments with small Russian cigarettes, wrapped in coffee-colored paper, gold-tipped, long Turkish cigarettes with a tube attached, straw tips, silk tips, cork tips, plain Virginias, amber-scented ones with rose-leaf ends, every possible variety.

She nodded for me to choose, and I picked a Russian, admired the little black eagles and lit it.

"It is a beautiful gift," I said.

"Ah, but I, I like exactly as well a Gold Flake. They are pretty though," she said, with some satisfaction, straightening them into neat rows.

There was a noticeable accent when she spoke, slight, but very pretty. I wondered if it was French, as it sounded, but she looked more Spanish, dressed by Paris. Her curving, rounded figure (one detests even slightly fat women till one sees young Spanish girls and then the word "rounded" is immediately substituted), the curls at the back of her neck, her high-arched small feet, all reminded me of that woman of Goya's with the scarf and the rose. She was not the hollow-eyed smoldering type of Velasquez's "Lady with a Fan" or Zuloaga's shawled beauties, but gay and lazy. I could not reconcile

her with Knox's; she did not seem to fit into its background. But as if in answer to this she spoke.

"Very dull here, isn't it?" she said, "I saw you arrive last night, you and your husband, is it? In this hotel one watches every arrival with excitement."

"My brother," I amended and told her our name. "Don't you think the dullness is amusing in a way, though?"

"Yes, yes, that's right," she said, nodding, "it is quite true."

Her voice fascinated me. "Comes out like a ribbon, lies flat on the brush"—no, that wasn't it, because her voice was not flat but round. Round and smooth and without the throaty affectation of a carefully trained voice. At one period I had mouthed a heavy English myself but this voice was obviously natural. Everything about the lady was round and smooth. But when she said "All right," as she did very frequently, there was a charming little rough catch to the "r."

"Do you sing?" I asked her. "It's very rude of me to ask so abruptly, but your voice sounds as if you did."

No, she did not sing; alas (with a little shrug), she only amused herself with music, hers would certainly amuse no one else. She was French which accounted for the accent.

"My name is Trent, Grace Leontine Trent. My husband was English."

The past tense. How comfortable to be Grace Trent with a husband in the past tense. But her black frock was the black of chic, not mourning. And the enviable stockings were rose-beige.

I got up from the lounge, looking at the clock and said,

"I hope surely to see you again. Perhaps you will join us here for a cocktail before dinner? They make them rather well."

She accepted and nodded good-bye. As I left she settled back into the

depths of the chair and replaced her feet on the fender.

### III

GRACE buying furs, Grace choosing a hat at Lewis', her boots fitted at Pinet; on the hunt for bargains in overblouses and jumpers at the Galeries Lafayette—"the Lafayette have always such nice gilets and tricot jumpers"—a pair of fringed gloves, very dashing, and wrinkly suede ones. We took a small flat off Curzon Street, on Bolton Street—Grace helped choose it. She helped me buy presents to send home, tortoise-shell cigarette cases and sharkskin boxes. She was our daily companion and intimate. There never was anyone who had fitted in so well. As I pointed out to an elderly English friend who had asked suspiciously just who Mrs. Trent was—no one knew—but I said,

"You see for yourself she is well bred and extraordinarily amiable, I know she is entirely discreet and quite easily shocked; as for her being an adventuress, as we have never paid for more than one or two teas and a couple of cocktails, and as Grace has consistently taken us everywhere, two chronically hard-up people, we would have hardly been very profitable acquaintances for an adventuress."

But the lady was unconvinced.

Though Grace was quiet and charming, we had to admit that there was a certain air of mystery about her. Why, for instance, did she spend hours in the writing-room, writing and dispatching many letters when she said she loathed letter-writing? For in fact there seemed no one in the world who could do as she liked and not do what she did not like so much as Mrs. Trent. A young widow (her husband had been killed the last year of the war) with an amiable old father who spent most of the year in Paris, and plenty of money, why did she write letters

when she didn't want to? And there were men, oldish, unappetizing creatures that Morris and I classified as The Wops, whom she seemed to feel bound to be polite to and to interview in the lounge at Knox's. They were mostly South American and Portuguese gentlemen, fat and disagreeable and their relation with Grace seemed anything but a tender one, really hardly friendly. But she saw them constantly, and when Morris and I protested, smiled blandly and said, "Business matters."

What had an independent young widow to do with business matters?

We had known her for three months. About this time Morris began to get rather soppy and sentimental about her. Things seemed to be drifting suavely toward an engagement. She was extraordinarily attractive, but not in the least coy or flirtatious—too subtle and quietly self-assured to need the painful kittenishness of most young women. And really almost magnetic in knowing what you liked and disliked. Had Grace said that she disliked a certain man whom you secretly hated or had you said it and she agreed with you? Never with the air of saying "yes" because she wanted to be amiable, but as if she had separately reached just the same conclusion.

"That's right," she would say, nodding and looking through half-closed eyes, "That's right."

"T-t-tut, shocking! Shocking!" In ready sympathy with your troubles, whether it was a bad quality glove or a woman who jabbed you with an umbrella and stole your taxicab. But she never said anything about herself, except such trivial things as the choice of black or silver slippers, or else things so intensely personal that they told you nothing; for instance, wondering if even an awfully nice husband (with a humorous glance at Morris) was ever quite as nice as being free.

One morning we arrived at the hotel about twelve-thirty, and having

dispatched the page for Martinis we turned into the lounge. Grace was sitting in the corner of the sofa near a table covered with worn and painfully familiar back numbers of *Punch* and was leaning over, apparently absorbed in a folded newspaper. This was in itself unusual, as I had hardly ever seen her look at one and she had said she never took any papers except the picture ones and these she only glanced at. On our entrance she looked up, startled and laid the paper down quickly.

"What were you reading?" I asked inanely. "Something amusing?"

"No, no, only an advertisement of Debenham's. They seem to be marking their French models down."

She turned to Morris to ask about seats for a matinee and I picked up the folded paper. It was the *Times* and I could find no advertisement of Debenham's on either the folded out page or any other. She seemed to have been reading the Court circular, which surprised me as Grace was so markedly not a snob. Her conversation was never about the grand people her acquaintances impinged on, she never had asked questions about our friends or expected to be questioned herself. What could thrill her in a Court circular, exactly like all others? "The Prince of Wales will open an exhibition of short-horn cattle in Blankshire." . . . "The Duke and Duchess of Sutherland have returned to their town residence." . . . "Ex-King Manuel of Portugal has returned from the Riviera." . . . "Lady Irene Curzon is at present, etc., etc."

I let the paper drop and the others being ready we started out toward the Embassy Club for lunch.

#### IV

ON the electric green walls of The Embassy the mirrors reflected the various lunch parties going on; reflections of celebrities and near-celebrities, of people who were well known because they came there twice

a day and people who had never been there before and were staring at the others. The contrast to the discreet dulness of Knox's was amusing. The place had recently been redecorated and the combination of green and violet-magenta velvet was not happy. Even under the electric light it was ghastly and robbed people of color, leaving them white and drawn-looking.

"Must have been designed by Elinor Glyn," said Morris, looking at that lady sitting in one corner near the wall. "It looks exactly like her, magenta hair, green eyes, green dress."

It did. The scheme of decoration also set off the pale charms of a wan youth of seventeen or eighteen, reputed to be a young baronet who had not missed luncheon, dinner or supper there in three years. He kept tossing back a lock of fair hair which fell across his babyish countenance, and talked in hushed tones to a striking brunette at least twice his age.

We met the young man who was lunching with us and found a table at the side. The boy was twenty-two or three and was one of those persons who exist to show you the new tango step introduced into the fox-trot and who delight in looking fixedly and scornfully at the feet of unhappy elders dancing by. Rather a harmless, nice boy, if somewhat conceited. The lunch proceeded. The Sauterne was good and Luigi had somewhere discovered wild strawberries which were served in little brown baskets on their own leaves.

Under the thawing effect of food and drink we became so cheerful as to be making quite a little noise for so early in the day. Eric Fenwick, the young dancing-man, executed caricatures on the back of the menu with what he called lightning rapidity. As a matter of fact, they were slowly and carefully done and he was rather proud of them. Grace smiled benignly from the height of twenty-six on our youth and inexperience.

She was the Miss Monkey-fur of the first evening again today. The black frock trimmed with it and preposterous eyelashes, long and black, veiling uncommunicative, amused eyes. Half-way through lunch a waiter summoned her to the telephone and we sat there, talking to Eric.

"Awfully nice girl, Grace," he said condescendingly. "Dances rather well, too."

"Have you known her long?" I asked, conscience of feeling guilty at pumping him.

"About five years, on and off. She's a friend of my sister's who met her at Como, I believe. One never seems to know her better, somehow. She's quite clever, though, and interested in all sorts of things. She was telling me a very amusing tale about a spy who was shot somewhere," Eric broke off as Grace came back to the table.

"Tell them about that spy, Grace," he said.

At first startled alarm in her eyes and then, with a look at his ingenuous, stupid countenance, unconcern again.

"A friend of mine told me," she said. "I don't think it would interest you, but sometime I will tell you."

"Do tell us now," we begged.

"Well, there was this lady, very beautiful, very charming, who was the friend—the lady-love—of that man you have seen at Knox's sometimes—the Portuguese, you know. She was young and blonde and quite stupid, or appeared to be. She had a villa near Lisbon, at Cintra, and one day it was searched by someone who had suspected her for some time. They discovered papers proving she was a spy, and this man who was in love with her had to sentence her to be shot. He has never gotten over it," she added.

"Never gotten over it? I think she was one to be pitied. Why didn't he help her escape, if he was so in love with her?" I said indignantly.

"Impossible. They always shoot

spies," she said. Then hurriedly, "or at least I suppose they do; I really don't know anything about it."

"A German, I suppose," said Eric.

"No, Royalist, stupid. What would a German spy be doing in Lisbon last year?"

"Well, you never told me it was last year, so how was I to know," remarked Eric, slightly aggrieved.

"It's not important, anyway. Don't be cross, Eric. I'm sorry I called you a stupid. Shall we go now?"

We went to a cinema and listened to the delightful comments of a young woman back of us, who, doubtful of the effect of the heroine's charm on her young man, kept mocking her in a loud voice. It was an English film and the female was a trifle heavy.

"Ow, just like a great hefephant," said the young woman, when the heroine was playful. "Mae Murray is the one I like. I 'ave been told I'm like 'er, meself."

Whether her young man agreed we could not hear. His replies were monosyllabic grunts.

We left at the end of the first part and filed out through the smoky dark. All around us people were perching tea-trays on their knees and girl ushers in frilled white caps sold chocolates and cigarettes up and down the aisles. Presently we were out in the air, which smelled fresh and damp after the cinema's stuffy atmosphere. We went back of Regent Street through Vigo Street, left Grace and Eric at The Piccadilly arcade, and walked on down Piccadilly.

It was not yet dark but a soft glamorous dusk, in which the street lamps and the headlights on the motors melted and shone faintly through the shadows. Blue and pearl and a vague sunset over Hyde Park—the colors of an opal. It was damp under foot, that insidious mud that seems to ooze out of the pavements in London, even on a fine day, but these same wet spots made smeared reflections of the opal colors. We



were mildly exalted and walked toward the flat very cheerful and pleased with ourselves. Morris talked of a diamond flexible bracelet, willed him by a freakish godparent, which he purposed giving Grace as an engagement present. We called up the typist who was to have spent the day typing and arranging the week's work ready to be sent to America and put her off. Tomorrow we were going down the river for the day with Grace and Eric or a precisely similar youth named Jerrold and no thought of work should mar its halcyon laziness.

## V

THE next morning was fair, or near enough to give an excuse for the expedition. We started out about eleven and walked quickly toward Knox's, through streets which, because of their prosperity, still had a virtuous early-morning freshness about them, as if it were eight o'clock and they were very good to be up so soon. Arrived there, I noticed an unpleasant smirk on the head porter's face, an expression which seemed to say "Ah, you're sold this time." We passed him and walked in to the desk of the manageress to send up our name.

"Mrs. Trent has left, madam," said the manageress.

"Left?" echoed Morris, "you mean she's gone on ahead to Maidenhead? Did she leave a message?"

"No, sir; she has left permanently, I think; took all her boxes with her and paid the bill this morning. Hawkins, didn't Mrs. Trent leave for good?"

The head porter moved forward unctuously, triumph in his eye.

"I don't know, I'm sure," he said. I handed him a pound note.

"Did she say where she was going?" I asked.

He eyed the note.

"No, she didn't; but I 'eard 'er tell the gentleman that brought the tele-

gram around something about Rio de Janeyero."

"What gentleman?" asked Morris quickly.

"I don't know, I'm sure," said the man, nor could any more information be extracted from him.

We walked into the lounge, dazed and flabbergasted. Morris shakily lit a cigarette and I read the morning's *Times*. Presently I heard Morris exclaim. He picked up a bit of paper and handed it to me. It was an empty telegraph envelope, anchovy-paste-colored with the familiar post office printing on it. Really only half an envelope, for one end was torn away, as if it had been opened in a hurry by an impatient finger. The penciled addressing or what was left of it ran:

Mrs. Trent  
c/o Alfredo R——  
18, We——  
Lond——

So, thought I, our charming friend was an international agent! Even more crudely expressed, a spy. Poor Grace, I thought complacently, the next time we see her where may she be—what may she have become? In fact, I pitied her rather. Which was a foolish thought, for pity was a sentiment that Grace in person never inspired. Only as someone disappeared, vanished, could one mentally condescend to her.

But the next encounter was very different. The morning was cool and a gentle drizzle made Paris a familiar city of wet streets and shining umbrellas. Determination, expressed by a firmly held purse and umbrella was in my eye, as I stepped out of the Meurice and walked up the Rue Castiglione toward the Place Vendome. For I had made up my mind quite firmly this time to at last possess a dress from one of the real Grandes Maisons, something with one of those uncontrovertible labels that would impress the most sceptical female friends.

I passed the glass and iron-work doors opened for me by the commis-

sionaire, who stood under a huge and dripping umbrella to pilot people safely in, and entered the hushed halls of *La haute couture*. It was very unlike a shop and very like a chaste gray and gold palace and, until a suave lady came forward and took charge of me, I felt slightly cowed and intimidated. The vendeuse shepherded me upstairs and there I looked at evening gowns displayed on beautiful young persons with exotic coiffures. I ordered a rather simple model *sans* the beads and embroidery, which made the original so extremely expensive, and listened to the complaints of the vendeuse, who, more in sorrow than in anger, explained that I would rob it of all chic, and what was a few thousand francs after all. After this one venture I simply amused myself by looking at clothes, at the people and out the window at the traffic in the Place Vendome. In the next room someone of great importance was buying evening wraps, and models, vendeuses, and little girl assistants kept running in and out with armfuls of glittering fabrics.

"Today it is chinchilla that she has the fancy for," said one impressed young woman to my Mademoiselle Celeste. "Everything must be chinchilla."

"Has she seen the silver wrap?" she answered.

"No, not yet, will you find it for her? *Pardon*, Madame, may I not attend to you while Mademoiselle Celeste gets the wrap? It will be only a moment."

"Certainly," I answered. "I'm only waiting till this rain lets up a bit," and I nodded to my vendeuse to go.

The new young woman was so

excited about their extravagant client that she couldn't help telling me little scraps of news about her.

"All her winter clothes this year trimmed with black fox."—"Three coats, six suits, seven street dresses." "The smartest client we have." "Two silver gowns, a black velvet cloak and the wrap madame hears us speak about—all in one hour!"

Naturally I wanted to see her—this lady who had everything one could want and then put in an hour buying more just for the amusement it afforded her. Yet, I must see her.

The door opened. Several women stepped out followed by Monsieur—himself and finally there emerged from this entourage in all the most exquisite trappings of the great lady of fashion—Grace!

But yes, it *was* Grace. Who else had such black curly hair, such huge velvety eyes that looked with characteristic tolerant gaze over the heads of these bowing and scraping shop people. She turned, nodded at Monsieur, and disappeared down the great marble staircase.

"That is Mrs. Trent, surely," I cried, turning to the vendeuse excitedly.

"*Pardon*, Madame, no," she said "That is the beautiful South American Ambassador, Madame de la Guardia."

And looking out the window I saw a huge black and silver Hispano-Suiza detach itself and glide like a great snake into the traffic of the Rue de la Paix.

Well, one very often guesses wrong. And Grace is eminently fitted to be an Ambassador.



# What Happened to Japhet

*By John Mosher*

I

OF all the great changes in New York and in the lives of his friends, none so impressed Hector Cass with a sense of mystery as the disappearance of Japhet Billings.

"But don't you even know if the fellow's alive or dead?" he asked.

He was having lunch at the Bankers' Club with Monty Dennison a few days after his arrival.

"No, I don't," said Monty, "I don't think he's dead. But I don't know. I don't think you'll find anyone who does know. Frankly, Hector, I think Japhet has acted pretty shabbily by us all. Just to wander off without so much as a good-by. You know how much he meant to all of us too." Monty shrugged a shoulder, "He just seems to have dropped out altogether."

No one had more definite information.

"I'd give the world if you could find him, Hector," Lydia Livingston said, after Hector had answered all her questions on the life and habits of the Thibetans, and led their talk in the direction he desired. "Honest, Hector, there is no one we need on earth the way we do Japhet Billings, now that we're all so depressed by the war and the taxes and prohibition. Really it would be like being young again to have him back. He was champagne, wasn't he? Or no, not so vulgar. I had some 1866 Tokay in Europe last summer, a little sweet, you know, but unexpectedly

heady, and lovely to look at against the light. That was more Japhet I think."

Hector laughed.

"And I never thought Japhet would get out of the light," he said. "It's funny, Lydia, but if I had come back here and found him playing about as I thought he always would, I wouldn't have thought twice about him. But now I'm as interested as you are in a star you've never heard of till it's eclipsed."

"There is certainly no reason why he shouldn't have played about till he dropped in his tracks—his mistress's tracks, I should say. Now that I'm an old woman, Hector—thank you, but it's only the lights—and have studied widely our society, I see lots of Japhets growing fat on other people's entrées; but, never, Hector, have I seen a Japhet so charming and witty and half the fun that our own was."

"I never understood why he was so much liked, why indeed I liked him so much myself. He wasn't remarkable; wasn't brilliant—"

"Thank heaven, no."

"He wasn't handsome—no Adonis—poor as a pauper—and you women adored him."

"My dear Hector, of course we did. He made us so fascinating to ourselves. He could convince the dullest, most uninteresting woman that she was peculiarly fascinating. He always said exactly the thing to you that you most wanted said, and which you'd given up hope of ever hearing. And it wasn't awfully clever flattery,

you see. He meant it. He really thought so—at the moment anyway. That was his genius. Oh, dear, how we need him now.”

“And the funny people he’d rake up—”

“That was another trick of his genius. His amazing stories of the impossible people he had found. The Lord knows how. The sort of people the rest of us are very careful not to mention if we do happen to know them. He would tell us how amusing they were and how we ought to know them. The impossible people simply lost their heads about him, and the rest of us all thought it showed a great deal of character, something especially generous in Japhet. ‘The drama of the dregs, we mustn’t overlook it,’ he used to say.”

Hector interrupted her, leaning back in his chair to laugh.

“I just remembered,” he said, “the time Japhet announced to us all that he was going to work. Old man Blair, wasn’t it, gave him a place in his office?”

“But you know the truth of that story, don’t you?” Lydia responded. “Isabelle Blair wanted Japhet on her yacht to amuse the guests while Pendleton Cox courted her; and she went and begged her father, wept and implored him, not to take on Japhet, so that he would have to go with her. Of course he did go.”

They paused a moment as the chatter of young people passed down the hall outside.

“That’s Marion,” Lydia said. “You haven’t seen her since she was eight, have you? She’s lovely now. Quite! But I’m afraid she’s going to marry the Merrill boy, and I do wish Japhet were here to show me there was something funny in that.”

“Perhaps if I knew the Merrill boy—”

“Japhet wouldn’t have had to. We always did think of him as the consummate trifier, yet—”

“Considering how we feel about him, I don’t see how we can call him

that. He’s important enough to us anyway.”

“Words are so crude. Of course he wasn’t a trifier, except in the stupid, conventional standard of things. He never could be a leader of men, or a master of finance, or any of those things which are considered so important these days.”

“He claimed, of course, that what makes history depressing is the fact that the deeds of only the great men live after them.”

“He was the great *bon camarade* of this earth, and it breaks my heart that I can’t have him to dinner tomorrow, or command him to tea next Thursday.”

“As I remember Japhet, it must break his heart too.”

“There’s that,” Lydia swung around, though it brought her in the cruelest rays of the light. “How can he, taking it all in all exist without us? Foul play, Hector! I am sure there was foul play.”

“He didn’t have money to run far with—”

“Not a cent. Oh, there was a father teaching Latin and Greek somewhere. Japhet used to sell things to get along. That table over there I bought from him. An aunt had left it to him. I made him take a ridiculous sum for it, even for a Duncan Pfyfe. I suppose that tided him over one season. Carefare, telephones, tips, socks. He didn’t have to buy much else.”

“We used to hand him over clothes.”

“Of course. Then he had that little room, with a bed in it, and a telephone, his *pied-à-terre*, he called it. He was never in it. How could he be, when he was everywhere else? Always enjoying himself! Always enthusiastic! At the trump of doom he’d have said: ‘Awfully good of you to ask me’ to the Angel Gabriel himself.”

“But Lydia, that sort of life couldn’t last forever. People would stand for it in a boy, but as the years



went on—it's rather ridiculous in the middle-aged."

Mrs. Livingston shook her head.

"You don't know your New York, Hector. At least not our middle-aged New York. We haven't changed so much; we still need someone to confess to, and to tell us who was there, and what he or she is up to now. We love nothing better in the world than to argue with someone who is eloquently sympathetic on the chances of happiness on earth, and if the poor don't have a better time than we do, and if there is such a thing as love. All that! Truck! But it fills up time so enchantingly, and makes us feel so intelligent."

"You still find a sympathetic audience?"

"They're all amateurs—amateur listeners—compared with Japhet. The city is full of stoutish, baldish gentlemen who help with tableaux vivants, tell us the scandals about the authors of the books we're reading, and what everyone is saying about everyone else. There is some pretense of an occupation perhaps, lecturing on the arts, or adviser of a committee to find employment for the unemployed, the officially classified as such that is. Modern philanthropy, you know, covers an infinitude of leisure. Then the arts! Out of the ranks of poets and painters who once elected to starve with the muses, come the most agreeable dinner guests. They never follow the example of Inspiration in keeping appointments: they are always on time. And I think the atmosphere about the lower parts of Parnassus must sharpen one's small-talk."

"Japhet interests me more than these slick butterflies. Where did you see him last?"

"Oh, he came to see me off. I remember. I was taking Marion across to school in Switzerland. When I came back, he was gone."

"Where?"

"No one knew. First I thought he was on the Ten Broeck's cruise,

and I lost time waiting till they got back. Then we took it for granted that he would turn up when some house-party or other disgorged. Before we realized it, a season was over, and no sign of him. By that time, Hector, my dear, we had got used to living without him—"

Hector rose.

"Your lives make me shudder. I can't pretend to find them as interesting as Japhet did. I have had to come home to understand why I went away."

"Blame us all you want. Only to find Japhet. Tell him I'll have that new prima donna from Vienna to dinner for him. Tell him we still have the ducks sent up from our place, and still eat them half raw as he liked. We'll lionize him as he said we used to do, for his lack of accomplishment."

## II

HECTOR had no time at once for direct investigation. He was kept busy with a round of entertaining in his honor; but at a tête-à-tête luncheon Teresa McVane managed to secure with him Japhet's name came up again.

It was a change to be remarked, Hector thought, that Teresa had deserted the hallowed regions of the avenue for the far East Side. She was tremendously proud of her little Georgian house, with the Wren portico, overlooking the river, and hardly gave him time for his coffee before she must show him the little plot of garden.

"Blackwell's Island," he said, "adds a cheerful note to the landscape."

Teresa followed his gaze across the river.

"I can't decide," she said reflectively, "just what ought to be done with it. I haven't come to that yet. But I think a few more turrets and battlements would be best. Heighten the medieval note! I should like ivy

but it takes time. I hope you're not going to say it depresses you. Think of the dungeons they used to have under the butler's pantry. You must grant that the whole place has quite an old-world look. Quite London, I think."

"Taken all in all, Teresa," he assured her, "it's about the most attractive corner I've yet seen in New York. Next time I come home I shall expect to be invited to tea under Brooklyn Bridge. Peck's Slip would go very well on stationery. But how did you ever find it?"

"Japhet found it."

"Japhet?"

"He made me drive over here one afternoon. Years ago. He showed me all the possibilities, and said if I were as clever as he thought I was I'd build a house here. You see I've done it."

She thrust an arm through Hector's.

"And to think," she cried, "that he can never see it."

"Dear Teresa, do you know what happened to him?"

Miss McVane hesitated.

"You won't think I'm such an idiot," she said at last. "You know I am superstitious."

"Out with it, Teresa."

"I am perfectly sure," she bolted ahead, "that he gave his life for his country."

"Japhet?"

"Promise not to laugh, Hector. I have an intuition. My intuitions have always been wonderful," her voice sank to a whisper, "I am perfectly convinced—it came to me the minute I read of it—that he is the 'Unknown Soldier!'"

"I assure you, Teresa, I am not laughing."

"Whenever I'm in Washington and give a dinner I always send the flowers to his grave. Japhet told me he wanted the flowers I choose for my parties on his grave."

Then there was old Montague, Harry Montague's father—poor

Harry whom the influenza did for five years ago.

"Now that Billings boy. We always liked that young Billings, Mrs. Montague and I, bright, nice fellow, always polite to us old people. I always said he'd amount to something if his friends ever let him alone. You didn't run into him in the East, did you?"

"Did Japhet go there?"

"Mrs. Montague says so. She reads me a poem about him. She's literary, you know; has been ever since Junior died, and I let her read to me. It cheers her up; keeps her mind off things. 'What's become of Waring. Since he gave us all the slip—?' That's the poem. 'Wanders Waring east away?' That's in it too. She reads that poem a lot. She likes it. She always liked Billings, and she's got the idea he did just what that fellow Waring did. Junior said he wanted that little bit he had—inherited from his Aunt Hattie—to go to Billings, and we're keeping it for him. Funny you didn't run into him over there. Then it's a big place, I know."

More and more during these gala days of his return to New York, Hector found himself inclined to brood on the possible fate of Japhet. Brooding was not his habit, but in this case a will to act was drastically hindered by an ignorance of how to go about it. He was not reconciled to an easy theory of Japhet's death. The notices, obituaries, a grave to be visited, all the paraphernalia and ritualism of the normal death were lacking. Sudden death, a savor of mystery in connection with death, only served to advertise it. Police, the press. investigations! Nothing brought about identification so inevitably as death of that sort.

There were more sinister kinds of disappearance. There were cases in many families, almost all great families, of some connection, who had unaccountably vanished for years, forever perhaps. Sometimes inheri-

tances hung suspended for their return. Fortunes awaited them, and they never came back.

Hector had sometimes run across such exiles in his travels. He had sought out acquaintance with them, and had been baffled always not only by the complexities and contradictions of the stories, so obviously fabrications, they regaled him with, but by a condescension as though they twitted him with being a mere amateur at best in adventure. And he conceded them the point, willing enough to see them in the highlights of melodrama.

His ability to cast a roseate glamour over these careers had contributed largely to the success of his books. These indeed had become as popular as the recent volume of the same genre on the islands of the South Seas; and soon enough he found his zest at seeing again his friends cramped by the bullying schedule of the celebrity. Possibly some of the persons so glowingly referred to in these books of his might feel he deserved to pay a tax of some discomfort for the liberties he had taken. It was certainly with an actual dread, the dread of one who knows himself to be no facile speaker nor possessed of that mysterious thing, "the platform manner," that he allowed himself to be booked for a series of lectures in the western cities of the state, Utica, Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo.

With genuine embarrassment he read the profuse advertising assigned him. He flushed scarlet before a full page in the *Rochester Democrat*, with florid encomiums of his books, sly hints of further revelations in his lectures, all embellished with a picture of himself in full equipment standing above a prostrate python, a photograph his manager had insisted on taking in New York, securing the setting and the python as one would the properties of a play.

But growing accustomed to the publicity, Hector began to enjoy it,

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and to find a certain whimsical curiosity in the comments of each new city he visited. One time, his mind reverting to Japhet, he wondered if the machinery of modern advertising might be used with effect in his case.

### III

THE possibility interested him, in spite of the scant chances of success, and did not leave his mind even on the platform before the Historical Society at Auburn. The popularity of his talks had warranted an extension of the tour to some of the smaller cities where the audiences seemed less formidable. This fact and an added ease as speaker gave him sudden courage to depart this evening from the standardized outline of his talk and touch upon the theme which had so much preoccupied him.

Somewhat abridging his facts, he broke off at last informally.

"Tonight," he said, "I want to make some comment of the comments I have received myself in the course of this tour. I am too much a novice at this sort of thing to be blasé about my press notices. I confess frankly that I read them all. I think they flatter me a good deal. But I don't mind that. I like it. It's a fine idea. It cheers me up. Aside from that, the newspaper people of these cities I have had the pleasure of visiting have given me lots to think about. One thing especially has impressed me in all these notices. I hope you won't mind if I take a little time to speak of it with you. I don't think it will bore you because it touches upon a very interesting sideline of my travel in foreign and out-of-the-way places.

"You are perhaps especially fitted to understand what I wish to say because of that great prison you have here. Don't be alarmed. It is not about prisons or prison reform or criminal psychology that I shall speak. You are probably pretty sick of that subject. Probably a good

many of you resent the presence of the penitentiary and don't want to be reminded of it any more than is necessary. Yet as you have near you this building symbolic, we might say, of an alien world, of the unhappy phase of life, you must be more aware than most people of other orders of living than our own.

"These press notices have all stressed the love of adventure, the wanderlust, indicated in my talks and books. As the reviewers have been good enough to find my talks as exhilarating as a page from 'Two Years Before the Mast' or 'Treasure Island,' or in one case, where I found the compliment equivocal from the fantasies of Jules Verne, they have also attributed the qualities of Mr. Dana and of Stevenson's hero to me.

"Far be it from me, ladies and gentlemen, to detract from any pleasure such an idea may give you. But frankly I don't deserve it. I am not worthy of these compliments, and so aware am I of the fact that I cannot feel happy until I have given the credit where it is due. With the actually strange, uncomprehended, hazardous side of life my own contacts have been brief, shallow, little more than reportorial. I have a suspicion that this is true also of most of us who come back and write and talk so glibly.

"A heavy curtain hangs between this established world of ours, and that other. To those who are not of it altogether, only a glimpse, a moment's vision is ever allotted. Artists have thrown light upon it. Verlaine knew it. Villon was of it. Indeed, many artists have known it who have revealed their knowledge only by an insight no other way to be explained, or by the inexplicable suppleness of their style. Genius has learned there the beautiful sensitiveness of frustration; has had vision of the gamin god of the unpreferred.

"I think we all feel the lure of this unknown world. The *nostalgie de la boué* is a very real thing. I have

been reading a novel by a Belgian, Eekhoud, wherein he describes a young man who forsook the rank in which he was born—who counted, as the author says, on the depths to make life tolerable to him.

"More of us than we realize have felt as that young man did, and have acted upon it. In the bar-rooms, along the wharves, on the ill-famed streets of distant cities, I have come upon these exiles, outcasts, wanderers. A peddler selling beads in Hong-Kong answered me once in indubitable Oxonian. It is rumored in the wildest district of Africa, that very heart of darkness Conrad wrote of, that the high priest of a certain tribe is a Connecticut Yankee. By what devious ways these men have gone so far from the clear path of life, it is almost impossible ever to discover. Their lives are the lives of genuine adventure. Before them the rest of us are indeed but amateurs.

"Impenetrable as it is, this world is very near us, in another sense. Sometimes in the course of our lives we are startled to find how near it is. Almost all of us, I think, have friends who have vanished into its shadows. I have myself, and since I have come back the mystery of the one man I have particularly in mind, has troubled me and perplexed me."

Hector paused a moment, and the pause seemed eloquently to fill a gap his words left untouched.

"Incidents of this sort," he went on, as though his reference were explicit, "remind us always how little in truth we know our friends. We spend an evening with a friend of years' standing. We know his bank-account and his love affairs. We think we do, that is. We do know the furniture in his room, the kind of drink he will mix himself when he is back in it, the very chapter in the novel he is about to read. Yet some evening as we leave him at a corner a smile suddenly supplements his farewells, an eager smile, as he is



free of us at last. It is a smile of anticipation. But of what? None of the circumstances of his life as we know dovetails into a cause for that anticipatory smile. It's as though all his acknowledged life, loves, friendships, interests were but the framing, the decoration, cherished perhaps, but in the great evaluation altogether minor, subordinate to passions, preferences, to the companions of his own world altogether unexpressed."

A man in the center of the hall rose from his seat, made his way to the aisle, and turned up it to the doorway. As the exit light fell upon his face for a moment, it was revealed to Hector, and the smooth flow of his words ceased.

It was the face of the man to whom he was referring—Japhet's face!

Hector wanted to call to him, to shout to someone to hold him. It was just what someone had done. He saw a man step forward and detain Japhet. They drew aside from the entrance and were talking together.

Brusquely bringing his talk to some sort of formal conclusion, Hector broke away from the small crowd who started forward with their appreciations, ran up the aisle and seized Japhet by the arms, calling him by name.

"Japhet," he cried.

The person who had detained Japhet so obligingly intruded.

"I guess that settles it," he said. "There aren't too many people who look like you and who are named just like you—Japhet."

In the little office where the three withdrew to escape the curious, this third man rubbed his hands.

"You're good for twenty years," he said to Japhet.

The two friends turned to each other.

"Shall I tell you the story, Hector, for your next lecture?"

"Don't," Hector groaned. "There won't be any more lectures. Can I help you, Japhet?"

The third person ventured to suspect that no one could do much for Japhet now.

"Sentiment, Hector!" Japhet remarked, "I'm afraid it rather ran away with your talk this evening. But I can't blame you, Hector. It must have been something of the same sort of weakness which brought me here into the lion's mouth to hear what you had to say, and to see you again."

At the door he turned back.

"Brace up, Hector," he said, "don't let yourself go. It's my fate, you know, to be always entertained, first by my friends, now by the government."



A WISE man never tells his girl that she is the only one he has ever kissed. He tells her she is the only one he has ever *wanted* to kiss.



NO woman gives a rap whether a man is true to himself, so long as he is true to her.



WHEN a woman is very jealous, it is a sign that she has lost a man before.



# The Seven Deadly Reforms

*By Mifflin Crane*

## I

### *Pacifism*

**A**BSOLUTE error is as imaginary as the absolute zero of the physicists. Thus, even the doctrine of a professional reformer necessarily contains some truth. For example, it is possible to conceive a very good case against modern war, but the briefs held by the propagandists of peace disregard all the points that might persuade an intelligent man. The current arguments against organized slaughter, now beginning to rise again from the smoldering ashes of the Espionage Act, fall, as usual, into three orders. To wit, we have (a) arguments purely sentimental—the white-haired mother mourning her boy; (b) the materialist doctrine that war impoverishes—whereas history reveals that strong nations have always grown fat by conquest; (c) the moral assertion that war is wrong against God—in spite of the fact that the Good God is credited with creating the august predatory system of nature.

When these reasonings are not foolish they are mendacious. The whole case against modern war may be effectively summed up in the statement that war, as pursued today, is wanting in all the gallantry of a once stupendously romantic enterprise. It is no longer a chosen encounter between chivalric knights, crusaders and cavaliers—it lacks even the vague but reasonable impulse of personal or national ambition. War has become but a phenomenon of inertia—a meaningless urge derived from a once significant business. It is waged by means of organized mobs whose mem-

bers have accepted the somewhat more favorable chance of carrying a musket as against the certain immurement that would follow any defiance of conscription. The cowardice of one mob is combatted by propagandist assurances that the opposing mob is even more craven; or the one mob is given the rat-like courage for combat by an endless reiteration of the other mob's obscene mercilessness.

Imagine Leonidas and his Spartans holding the pass of Thermopylæ with a trim rabble of supernumerary Y. M. C. A. secretaries! Think of Hannibal defeating Varro at Cannæ accompanied by the Red Cross and the Knights of Columbus! Did Bull Durham do its "bit" when old Omar I entered with his Moslem into Jerusalem, after having conquered Syria, the Mesopotamian valley, Egypt and Persia? How many prophylactic packets and moral prohibitions did Genghis Khan impose upon his Mongols when they descended into Hungary?

I give my vote to any society that opposes war as conducted in these times, but I shall not oppose any other society that furthers war upon a more ancient and respectable basis.

## II

### *Eugenics*

ALTHOUGH Dean Inge is a highly intelligent man, he is also a Churchman and a Christian and must, therefore, when he has vented his natural scepticisms, give his adherence to some scheme whereby humanity may be improved. The Dean seems to rest his hope not primarily in our Lord Jesus,

but in the scientific breeding of a better race. That is to say, in eugenics.

Very well. There are possibilities in eugenics. A few generations of selective breeding and almost any desired type of humanity is possible. Within little more than a decade the breeders in the corn-belt have evolved a type of hog with "daylight under him"—in other words, a tall, long-legged, arched-back hog capable of carrying more meat. Who will say that what has been done so easily for swine may not likewise be accomplished for that foremost mammal, God's masterpiece, Man?

But there are certain practical, and, I am afraid, serious difficulties concerned with the scientific breeding of men. To begin with, a body of master-breeders would have to select the desired types. I see in this selection a source of ceaseless cavil, of endless, acrimonious dispute. Would all the master-breeders agree upon a single type—a splendid, beef-eating, bare-back riding, forward-looking, square-dealing variety of Roosevelt, let us say? Or would it not be far more probable that when one group of master-breeders began the procreation of numberless Roosevelts, another group would compete with Woodrows, another with Lloyd Georges, and still another with Kemal Pashas?

To the seemingly inevitable confusion derived from the efforts of competing breeders a further cacophonous note would be struck by what, in some sort of eugenists' jargon, might be called the "accidentals." I refer to those extra-legal individuals that would be produced, from time to time, outside the official hatcheries. Another constitutional amendment would have to be enacted to prohibit these. And that would mean a fresh horde of enforcement agents. So, in the final analysis, the Dean's hope turns out to be less an exalted means toward the superman than rather lewd material for a burlesque at the old Trocadero.

### III

#### *Prohibition*

IN addition to the mendacities of the

paid propagandists of Prohibition, many hopeful errors reside in the opinion and doctrine of those to whom the prohibitory legislation is anything but a saving grace. For instance, it is pointed out that Prohibition is socially unfair, since it has worked only to deprive the working man of his beer, whereas the wealthy are said to obtain their accustomed beverages easily. If this were true, the Eighteenth Amendment would be less exasperating than it proves to be. But as a matter of fact, when the wealthy brother pays down \$150 for a case of Haig & Haig, what is it that is really delivered to his cellar? Nine times out of ten, under cover of a spurious label and a crudely imitative bottle, there is discovered an appalling mixture of carbon bisulphide, waste sulphite liquor, ethyl mercaptan, and nitrogen iodide. Consequently, if Prohibition is a kind of class legislation, it operates to the prejudice of the rich, not the poor.

As a matter of fact, the joke in Prohibition is getting stale. For a year or two it was amusing and even a bit exciting to walk past the corner policeman while carrying a brief-case charged with bottles of alleged Vermouth, but the spice of that adventure grows imperceptible in view of the fact that the alleged Vermouth, when inspected in the kitchen, proves to be nothing more than valerian and pepper-water—at \$12 a quart. I was in favor of Prohibition while the fun lasted, but the sting is scarcely worth the honey.

### IV

#### *Vice Crusading*

It is now admitted by all well-informed persons that the crusades against the modern Messalinas achieve no sensible end. While it is doubtless true that today there are fewer successors to Phryne of Thebes on the streets than there were a decade ago, the diminution in the numbers of these ladies has nothing to do with the efforts of the vice-crusaders. They have diminished just as Mr. Campbell's business of can-

ning soup would diminish should Mr. Ford endow a foundation for the distribution of limitless canned soup free of charge. The dandelion is a beautiful flower but florists will never sell them so long as they may be plucked gratis in any field. It is not the Law and Order Societies but the Flappers that make, of vice-crusading, a futile business. Then why should it continue? Vice-crusading serves no purpose to-day save that of pornographic amusement to a small group of pastors and deacons who serve on investigating committees. These men should be obliged, like the rest of the public, to turn to the cinema for their erotic stimulation, so that no more public money shall be spent upon their private diversion.

## V

*Better Movies*

EVERYBODY knows that the rage of the producing brethren for more Art in the movies is all buncombe. Who are the gulls to be captivated by these lofty idealisms? Certainly not the movie audiences. Nevertheless, some very legitimate reforms are possible to the cinema. The screen derives a large proportion of its patrons from those chronically interested in voluptuous sex shows. If the producers had any practical eye to improvement of their product they would see to it that, (a) all cinema bathing beauties were indeed shapely; (b) that no female star should be cast for a picture requiring décolleté unless her neck and shoulders were of the sort to stand the revelations of the Klieg lights; (c) that three-fifths of the female stars still playing the parts of Juliets should never be cast for anything but the rôles of duennas;

(d) that when Simple Innocence, in the rural picture, climbs over the stile, thus inadvertently revealing a stretch of stockinged limb, that bit of inadvertence should be worth the revelation.

## VI

*Antivivisection*

LET us presume for a moment that the medical savants carve up their rabbits and guinea pigs merely for their own amusement. What of it? It is human to enjoy cruelty. For nearly two thousand years innumerable Christians have derived one of their chief satisfactions from the thought that all heretics and heathen must inevitably burn in hell. Against this lurid pleasure in another's pain, the presumable amusement of an occasional vivisectionist in the antics of an albino rat under the scalpel is mild and innocuous.

## VII

*Comstockery*

ONE of the exasperating features of the Comstocks is that not only do they senselessly seek the suppression of works of art but of pieces that, while they make no pretense to artistic stature, are nevertheless smutty. Here we have another one of the dubious blessings of civilization—namely, that when one wishes to indulge the innocent pleasure of relating a frankly off-color story, one must first lock the doors against intrusive gumshoe men. In short, a good, ribald tale has no chance of circulation unless it gets itself up in æsthetic garments, and masqueradingly howls for the sanctity and inviolability of Art!





# A Declaration

*By Jim Tully*

*[Author of "Emmett Lawler"]*

## I

**L**IFE, to me, is a mirror, moved three times by a transfer company. Every time a fellow tries to adjust it, he cracks it again.

There was a day when I worried a great deal about life. I accept it now. It is interesting, confusing, heartbreaking and bewildering. I have watched my ideals shrivel up like daisies under an African moon. I have loved women, and have watched them pass to other men and other dreams. More deceitful even than myself, and more subtle, they are now crooning the age-old songs in less sophisticated ears than mine. And the ears flap in joy and wonder. On the boobery of man floats the ego of the world.

## II

I NEVER did believe in God. I had it all figured out when I was still quite young. And, as a rule, I don't like clergymen—those puffers of platitudes while little children are hungry.

## III

I HAVE never believed in "working myself up" to any certain position. If one is clever, one gets by. If one isn't—what matter?

## IV

As a boy in a small Ohio town, I was a magnificent drunkard. I have

reformed since. Volstead and others were conniving to poison me. I believe in life, though; for there are a few things I should hate to leave. Meaning—

A white and blue dappled sea under the light of the moon—a woman with brains—and a heart— A woman who thinks that I am a real writer—and that barring accident—I may not die with a knot under my left ear, but live to a troubled old age. For Irish dreamers are always troubled.

## V

My beliefs are—vague and confusing. My sympathy is strong—and useless.

My heart goes out to the Wobblies—head-battered and bloody, facing the shrapnel of economic wars. I admire the miniature overalled Dantons who scream like the mad French eagle—"We must dare, and again dare, and forever dare!"

I do not admire Judge Gary—suave believer in God, the Bible, and the twelve-hour day.

## VI

I WOULD join no lodge, or anything else for the betterment of mankind. I might consider something that would make them more picturesque. The mob is too moral. I do not like the mob. I had contempt for them when I was a tramp. I am still a snob. And yet, I'm considered a whale of a mixer.

## VII

Now and then, when driven into a corner, Life slamming me all the while with lead in his gloves, I ache for a solace. So I turn to the woman mentioned a few lines above. But I have forgotten. She has left me since I began writing these lines.

## VIII

I HAVE been a pagan all my life. Yet—I like Christ, the Agitator. The cross must have hurt His shoulder. I have heard since that a nail of it stuck near His heart. A Jew friend of mine, a pawnbroker, told me about the nail. He believes in reincarnation. He was the fellow who handed Christ the sponge dipped in the bitter stuff. I believe his story at that. For he buys trinkets from old women with shawls on their heads. And he cheats them. He thinks his fellow pawnbroker, Jurgen, was the name of a modified milk.

However, I have always felt sorry for Christ. Out of twelve chosen friends—two doublecrossed Him. And the rest of them probably garbled His

words. One should not choose friends among fishermen.

## IX

Just what does life mean to me? I don't know. Fame is merely the prolonging of neighborhood gossip. Money—my happiest days were spent—broke—under the stars—a youthful hobo. Drink—damn Volstead! Men and women are only interesting when they're drunk. I mean the interesting ones. The rest are terrible at all times. They bore me—like attending an Artists' Ball in Greenwich Village.

I have lived greatly in my time, "touched flowers and furs and cheeks," and I have never met a man who was not a hypocrite. As I bulge my way up the ladder, though, I meet men who admit it. That helps.

## X

My dream: a brown-skinned maiden on a still purple and yet undiscovered island. I have had everything else, I think. I would never run away from her as Frederick O'Brien did. Fred is a poor Irishman.



## Silence

*By Margaret Widdemer*

**B**BETTER you think my heart is light,  
Better I think yours is not broken,  
Better we parted yesternight  
And no word spoken:

Better they break, the roads we go,  
Better they turn afar, apart,  
You with your heart I must not know,  
I with my hidden heart:

We have been brave—there shall be never  
Whisper or word or lightest token . .  
But oh, the years, forever, forever,  
With no word spoken!

# The Decision

*By L. M. Hussey*

## I

ALL the movable furnishings had been pushed back against the walls. The rug had been rolled up and stood on end in a corner. In spite of these efforts to create a free space, the little apartment living-room was much too small for the comfort of the dancers. But after the fifth cocktail no one was aware of discomfort.

Conspicuous among the dancers was the woman named Catherine. Her hair, tintured with henna, was a deep and luscious red. She was cunning enough to avoid the use of rouge on her cheeks and her white face contrasted notably with her red hair. This pallor also reduced, somewhat, one's realization of her plumpness. Without being physically lithe, she managed to give the impression of it.

A thin young man, almost cadaverously wasted, stood near the phonograph and renewed the discs. Every time he wound up the motor spring the effort seemed to exhaust him. His face was blanched and moist; there was a dew-like accumulation on his forehead. The guests looked at him and smiled, and later, when he abruptly disappeared, they laughed.

Someone else wound up the phonograph and placed the records on the turntable. The tom-tom noise of the music was ceaseless. Young Hadley was dancing for the third consecutive time with Catherine. Although they had not met before that

evening, they were already calling each other by their first names.

With his face pressed against her pale cheek, Hadley was whispering close to her ear. As he talked his whispered breath made a little furrow in her hennaed hair.

"Certainly we're going to see each other again," he said. "That's silly to say we're not."

He was so insistent that she found it difficult to put him off. Furthermore, he was pleasant and agreeable! The conviction came to her that his words were true—it was certainly a silly thing to suppose that they would not see any more of each other after this evening. The young man was still importuning for future meetings. Abruptly she moved her head aside, away from his cheek, and a little backward, so that she could look into his eyes. As she spoke there was a degree of brutal hardness about her lips.

"Didn't Alice tell you that I am married?" she asked.

They collided with another pair of shuffling dancers, and he swung her about in a narrow circle. Meanwhile, he nodded.

"Oh, you knew that?" she asked.

He nodded again.

"I don't care about that," he whispered. "I've never seen your husband, Catherine, and possibly I never will. He doesn't exist for me."

She began to laugh a little. It was sardonically amusing to think of Howard so complacently willed out of existence. As for herself, she could

achieve no such facile denial of his being. But why not? Howard's life was only significant in so far as it meant something to her. And surely he had ceased to mean anything—anything significant! Couldn't she, like Hadley, forget him? Daubs of color appeared in her white cheeks.

There was a sudden outburst of laughter and scuffling at the other end of the room. An obscure contest was in progress about the light switch on the farther wall. Then the lights were extinguished and in the unexpected darkness the noise of the phonograph, instead of being derived from a single source, seemed to emanate from every quarter of the room, an incessant, dominating rhythm. Catherine felt Hadley's arms tighten about her and his lips came searchingly across her cheek. When they found her own lips she did not withdraw them until the lights flared on again.

"May I see you tomorrow?" he asked.

Her resolution had been made. The kiss she had given Hadley and those she might bestow in the future would be no more than a retributive coin in payment for Howard's indifference. No more than that? Yes, they would have an additional value, they would be worth something for themselves!

"You want to see me again tomorrow?" she asked.

"I certainly do!"

She hesitated a moment.

"I'm not sure what time it could be," she whispered. "I'll have to see what Howard's going to do. Suppose you telephone me."

"When?"

"Late in the morning."

"What number shall I call?"

She murmured the telephone number and he made her repeat it several times, in order that he might not forget.

At this moment Alice appeared with a tray of fresh cocktails. The dancing ceased and everybody hast-

ened to secure one of the slender-stemmed glasses. This would be, thought Catherine, a good opportunity to escape. She no longer wished to dance, even though it was pleasant to be in Hadley's arms. What she wanted was to be alone with the unique pleasure of her new resolution, to ponder it to herself. No one in that laughing crowd guessed that she had just made a momentous decision—the decision to emancipate herself from what had become an intolerable way of life.

Unobtrusively she slipped out of the living-room and entered one of the bedchambers where her hat and wrap were piled up unceremoniously among others on the bed. As she adjusted the little toque to her head, she wondered for an instant that she felt no shame at her departure from the last and most important of all the conventions that had been taught her years before. But why should she feel any shame because she had granted Hadley permission to see her—or at least, permission to talk with her again? Reversing her customary judgments, she imagined that it would have been more shameful to have denied Hadley. Certainly she had some right of romantic happiness! If Howard had failed her, she must find someone else.

She gazed for several seconds at her face in the mirror. She was not growing younger. In another five years such a youth as Hadley would not be so eager to know her. The recent use of henna had restored some measure of her youthfulness. She must shortly contrive other devices. And above all, she must be very quick to seize any happiness that offered itself. No more harsh fidelities! No more adherence to impossible codes!

Alice, passing with the empty tray, saw her standing at the mirror, adjusting her hat and wrap.

"You're not going, dear?"

"Yes," she answered. "I *must* go now! I never expected to find such



a crowd when I ran over. But I've had a lovely time."

Alice pressed her to stay.

"John Richards needs about two more cocktails and then he'll begin to perform. You'd better stay just a little while, dear."

Catherine shook her head. She kissed Alice and hurried through the hall, lest she should see Hadley and be intercepted.

## II

IN the street she hailed a taxi and was taken to her apartment. She entered and lighted the lights. No one was home.

She was not sleepy and she sat down in the living-room, her face in the chromatic shadow of a maroon table lamp. It had become a familiar thing to sit here alone in the evenings. Did Howard presume that she would always sit in just the same way, her hands idly lying in her lap? When he came home he would be unaware that she had been out. She could go out every evening, if it pleased her, and he would never know, nor question her.

A flush of anger tinted her cheeks and she stiffened in the chair. That of all things was the most unbearable—this liberty, through his indifference, to do as she pleased. To be a jealously watched prisoner would be far, far better. She found herself envying those women who cannot turn without being questioned. Half the pleasure in the rebellion she contemplated evaporated with the thought Howard would not even guess her insurgence.

But why must she persistently think of him? Wasn't every bond and tie severed by his own careless hand? She tried to think of young Hadley as if he were the first romantic presence that had come into her life, as if Howard had never existed. Couldn't she, with Hadley, revive some of those early delights, those trepidations and eager anxie-

ties that had been almost forgotten? Her husband, the young man had said, didn't count. She must forget him.

That was not easy. Indeed, she wanted to remember. She wanted to feel that any affair she might have with Hadley would have its effect in Howard's life, would take on the character of a punishment for neglect. This thought startled her. She was beginning to ponder it when Howard's step sounded in the hall.

He looked into the living-room and saw her sitting in the deep red shadow of the lamp.

"Hello," he said, carelessly.

He stood a moment in the doorway and then remarked:

"I'm tired. I'm going to bed."

She did not answer. But her anger had flared again. Certainly there would be some way to arouse him from his indifference. This thought was still in her mind when she went to sleep.

The moment she awoke in the morning she thought of the expected telephone call. She arose and dressed slowly. Howard was still in bed. Now and then she glanced at his face, turned sidewise on the pillow.

It was still an indubitably handsome face. But as she gazed at him it seemed to her that his features were intolerably remote. He was measurelessly removed from her. Nothing that she could do would hurt him. And after all, the only thing she wanted was to hurt him, to make him feel once more that she was deeply significant.

Realizing this, she experienced a sense of profound helplessness. Young Hadley would never be a successful instrument for this purpose. Howard would laugh at that youth. She clenched her fists together with a despairing anger.

Then she grew more calm. Well—that much was understood. As an instrument for her purpose, Hadley would indubitably fail. And there was no other need he could serve.

The old delights, the old trepidations? She had forgotten their savor. She did not want them. Hadley had nothing to give her.

Howard was still sleeping when the telephone rang. Why not shake him by the shoulders and exclaim:

"Wake up! It's the telephone, it's a lover of mine waiting to talk with me!"

But she committed no such fantastic, ineffectual act. She went to the telephone and lifted the receiver.

"Is that you, Catherine?" came Hadley's voice.

"No," she answered. "You must be mistaken in the number. There's no one called Catherine here."

And she replaced the receiver on the hook.



## Gina

*By Roda Roda*

**N**EVER have I known a more seductive girl than Gina Romanesque, the Bojar's daughter.

A figure like a leopard, all muscles and no bones, hips like a boy, skin the color of hazelnuts, and the raciest, wickedest little head, with eyes of Japanese lacquer and blueblack satin hair.

One afternoon we were revelling together before the Café della Città, under blooming oleanders. Gina drank chocolate. So did I. She remarked upon the fact that I always drank what she did. Was it an accident? She wondered.

"It is fate!" said I.

Just then a wasp appeared on the scene.

In a threatening curve it approached us, hummed around Gina, then, with sudden swoop, turned toward me and descended upon the rim of my cup. There it stopped, its iridescent wings trembling in the sunlight.

Gina, the leopard, was on the alert.

And sure enough—in another moment the wasp had lost its balance and fallen into my chocolate, where it struggled for its life.

And beautiful Gina, in the most matter-of-fact manner, pulled a hairpin out of her blueblack satin coiffure, and skillfully saved the wasp's life.



**T**WO kinds of women are attractive to men: a pretty woman who is clever and a pretty woman who isn't.



**M**OST women like handsome men, love rich ones, and marry homely paupers.



# A Bohemian Garden

By Helen Woljeska

**I**T sometimes seems to me that in Bohemia the sun must have a fonder brilliance, the air a gladder vibration, the summer a lovelier fragrance than anywhere else. So much is certain, that nowhere have I seen a more beautiful garden.

By the side of two silent ponds it was stretched out, in golden light and velvet shadows, this Bohemian garden. In it stood huge, majestic chestnut trees and acacias beloved by bees; grapes of all colors ripened on sunny trellised walls; blue sweet plums and red, sound cherries blinked among shining leaves; and on its smooth lawns stood groups of flowering shrubs like giant bouquets: golden laburnum and pert snowballs, lilacs, and white jessamine of unforgettable perfume. There were fir-trees with low hanging branches under which, hugging the ground, one could imagine oneself hiding from Ruebezah's wrath. And there was one solitary, strange, oriental tree with smooth light bark and large pale leaves, that made one dream of magnificent young sultans, dazzling harems, and horrible oriental demons.

In the centre of the garden a fountain threw its slender stream of water high up into the summer air, from where it fell back as glittering rain upon the tall reed grasses and yellow water lilies. The three little baronesses would have loved to climb over the wrought iron fence and bathe in the still, dark pool. But their governesses would not hear of such a thing. The German one curtly said:

*"Unsinn!"* while the French dramatically exclaimed: *"Quelle idée effrénée!"*

In lovely curves many wide and narrow paths of yellow gravel led through the garden. A few of them ended abruptly in some shady, secret nook, wonderful to dream in, or croon over a sick doll. The others, in complicated windings, meandered all through the garden, finally bringing one back to the very place one had started from. They were fringed by borders and beds of flowers, flowers of all colors and types, gay and festive like an array of femininity. There were pink hollyhocks, slender and very elegant, like some of Mamma's friends; stiff, patrician-looking dahlias that reminded one of Aunt Amalie; and blustering peonies, like the doctor's wife. The cornflowers were friendly, blue-eyed young mothers, the gillyflowers starched, giggling schoolgirls, the mignonettes fuzzy babies, and the asters nice cooks and pleasant chambermaids. Laughing, mocking, spicily brilliant, the carnations flaunted their beauty in the sunshine; morning glories, delicate and hectic, had their day of joy; large-petalled poppies, white, mauve, orange and scarlet, looked at one with somber, brooding, oriental eyes; and the passionate fuchsias mysteriously drooped their symbolic heads. But loveliest of all were the roses. The wide esplanade before the veranda was thickly bordered by them, glorious centifolias, so pink, so lavish, so deeply perfumed, so exuberantly blooming from May until the snow began to fly! And all over the garden there were clusters of

them and groups of high stemmed varieties, Mamma's special favorites: creamy Marechal Niels, and dark red roses, one kind almost black, a black velvet rose of ravishing perfume—a dusky, exotic princess she was, even more exciting than the pale camelias and flaming African cactus flowers that lived in the hot, damp air of the greenhouse.

At certain hours every day the well-known cavalcade of two tall governesses and three small baronesses would descend from the veranda of the great, white, affectionate-looking manor house. The German governess always brought a book, the French some sewing, and each little girl her youngest doll in a white wicker baby carriage. Together they walked down one of the principal paths, to the "rondeau," or the "pleasure house," or the "hill," where the governesses installed themselves on comfortably shaded benches. The three little sisters, however, even at this early age found it impossible to stay together. The youngest one never ventured away, preferring to remain under the protecting eye of authority. But the elders, each following her own fancy, sometimes wandered far from the beaten track, even beyond the greenhouse where, dozing in the sun, lay the vegetable garden with its long rows of regularly planted beds framed in by strawberry borders, currant and raspberry hedges, and trellised dwarf trees, all holding out aromatic temptations of forbidden berries and fruit. Or, abandoning all paths, they plunged into the dense underbrush in whose obscurity mysterious adventures of terror and delight could be expected. . . .

For many interesting and beautiful things happened daily in this garden. Golden bees, fuzzy bumblebees, and the most gorgeously colored butterflies hovered in its enchanted air. Hairy and horny caterpillars, black, furry, malicious spiders, slimy snails, scuttling earwigs and horribly coil-

ing rainworms lived in its ground and on its leaves. Small, jeweled beetles visited the luxurious roses and blue-green dragonflies the languorous water lilies. Queer waterbugs performed all sorts of antics in the fountain. Slender, swift lizards and clumsy toads sunned themselves on the glittering rocks of the artificial "hill." And countless birds hopped across the lawns, slipped through dense foliage, or swished up, high, high, until one could see them no more.

There were other, larger, playmates and killjoys to bring variety into daily life. Most beloved was the baby lamb, snowwhite and blue eyed, trusting and intelligent, new every year, yet ever the same! Its mother, the temperamental "stara," was less amiable: she would stamp her foot angrily whenever something displeased her, shake her head, and lounge forward ready to fight anybody. Luckily she was tied to a stout pole, but her rope was dangerously long. A haughty pair of peacocks, picturesque but easily offended, made the neighborhood of the veranda somewhat unsafe. However, Pluto and Hector, the huge St. Leonbergers who usually were found dozing on the gravel of the wide entrance-drive, could be relied upon to keep them at bay. Another figure rather to be avoided was the gardener. He was a stern, youngish man, with yellow face, drooping brown mustache, and high black boots, who would tolerate no trespassing of his rules. His helpers did not matter. They were Czech girls, robust, short-legged, flat-faced, barefooted, who wore vividly printed dresses and kerchiefs, and handled their big rakes and heavy watering cans in so slow, dumb, stolid a fashion that they seemed much less personal and animated than the flowers and beetles. Enveloped in sunlight and dappled shadows, they actually melted, disappeared into the garden's own, immovable, unchangeable presence.



Ah! it was a wonderful garden, a fairy land with elves and ogres; a complex of beautiful color and sound, fragrance and animation; a whole universe filled with gaiety and thrills, dangers and temptations, and golden visions without words! Never did the thought enter the heads of the little baronesses that a summer might come when they no longer could run on those gravel paths, play on those fragrant lawns, bury their small noses in the laps of luscious centifolias. With children's

logic they concluded that, since it was there now, it must always be there, that always its flowers must bloom, its butterflies carouse, its birds jubilate. . . .

And perhaps they were not quite wrong. Perhaps it still exists somewhere, in mid-air, like a mirage. For, whenever they need to vivify their spirit of adventure, their adoration of beauty, their defiance that laughs at all life's governesses, they dream themselves back into their garden in Bohemia.



## The Congressional Limited

*By Leonard Hall*

**A**T Baltimore—"La Follette is a damned rascal! Brookhart is a damned rascal! They're all damned rascals!"

I went out and had more gin.

At Wilmington—"Well, sir, the *Washington Post* is a good sound administration sheet. Personally, I always read the editorials in the *New York Times*."

I went out and had more gin.

At Elizabeth—"Well, sir, I've been at the Chevy Chase Club when senators were putting away all the hooch you'd pour down 'em, and what I say is that if prohibition—"

I went out and had more gin.

Hoarse voices came faintly to me.

"Well, sir, my boy Ed was Over There. And as he says to me, 'Those foreigners may be all right, but this little old country is good enough for me, I'll tell the world!' And I say—"

I stayed out and had more gin.

The chimneys of Rahway beat a tattoo of rainbow beauty against the evening sky, and the quiet marshes beyond Newark lay like golden pools of stillness as the sun went down.



**T**HERE are nine ways of making a woman love you. All of them involve lies.



# Excusiana

*By C. G. Sheldon*

**I**'VE got to leave town for a few days, but I'll call you the minute I get back . . . I won't be able to tomorrow, dear, on account of an important business engagement . . . Why, I never even saw the girl before . . . Of course I phoned you, but they said no one answered . . . Well, you know I never meant it, darling . . . I wanted to, dear, but I was so terribly busy I didn't have a second to spare . . . No, I never will again . . . But there was nothing that wasn't all right . . . You know I love you too much to do anything like that . . . Well, I must be going now, darling, or I'll miss that train . . . I wish I could, but I've got such a bad head-

ache . . . Oh, it was only said as a joke . . . No, I never told her that I loved her . . . I really didn't want to, but she begged me to go with her . . . I'd certainly like to, but I promised an old college friend I haven't seen for years that I'd dine with him . . . Sorry I'm so late m' dear, but had such hard day downtown . . . You know I'd do anything you'd ask me to . . . Of course I want to, but I don't see how I can, dear . . . No, I'm *not* going to see another woman . . . You see, darling, in my business I can never tell what's going to happen next . . . No, dear, I love you too much.



## Things

*By Elisabeth Clarke*

**T**HREE things are pitiful to me:  
A blind beggar searching for a lost penny.  
Youth's high-hearted certainty.  
Old hands fumbling at the door of death.

And these are beautiful to me:  
A dead face, austere still.  
A dumb beast's fidelity.  
Moonlight on my window-sill.

And of dreadful things these are three:  
The eyes of a woman of the street.  
A crippled child's serenity.  
The sound of marching soldiers' feet.

And this is a sadder thing than any:  
A blind beggar searching for a lost penny.

# An Unfinished Story

*By Frances Norville Chapman*

## I

**I**F Vance Leigh hadn't lost another tooth he never would have heard Mrs. Styles' story.

Ordinarily, he would have been furious with a hostess who placed him between Florrie Phelps, who never stopped talking, and Mrs. Styles, who was over sixty and deaf.

Leigh was a coveted dinner guest—rich, good-looking, forty-five and unmarried—and he was accustomed to more consideration than this. He had been everywhere, seen everything, done everything; he was a born talker, and as he rarely, if ever, talked about himself, people usually found him interesting. However, he had more than once struggled vainly against the torrential overflow of Florrie's talk, which was played upon and illuminated by what a fatuous youth had once called her "wide, sweet smile." Florrie was no longer young, but she had kept all of the gestures of youth, and with the years her smile had widened and widened into a wide, deep chasm.

During his frequent visits to the Western city, Leigh had often regarded Mrs. Styles with interest and curiosity. He met her everywhere, at the theatre, the opera, at large dinners and small teas, and always with a sense of possible contacts, of possible intimacy and understanding. Many times in situations that hinted of subtleties, his eyes had unconsciously sought hers and had been answered by a glance like the sudden unfurling of a banner in a breeze. She was a large woman with thick white hair and fine eyes. Her head

was modeled with a strength and delicacy seldom seen save in the old women of the Dutch painters, and her beautiful hands had the same wonderful portrait quality, firm, white, long-fingered, sympathetic.

She couldn't have been much beyond sixty years, but she gave the impression of old age, without any of its decrepitude; there was no loss of vigor, it was rather a blurring of all of her tones, like an old tapestry whose original design is enhanced, enriched and subtilized by its soft neutrality. There was a stillness in her face not to be confounded with the inattentive dullness so often seen in the faces of the deaf; it expressed serenity rather than resignation; acquiescence rather than passivity, and something in her lucent dark eyes and humorous mouth bore token of a cordial youth that held no denials or regrets.

Leigh always had the feeling that her going about in society was not as an escape from her devastating deafness, which never seemed to burden her friends, never seemed to temper her own enjoyment of the crumbs she was able to gather from the feast spread temptingly just beyond her reach. He had often intended to call, as she had invited him to do; he knew they would have interesting things to say to each other. Nevertheless, he wouldn't have chosen her for a seat-mate at a dinner party where he'd be obliged to withhold his pregnant asides, or wonder if she had really caught his best *mot*. She never asked one to repeat.

But tonight Leigh didn't care. Like Florrie, he had kept the attitude rather

than the aspect of youth, a thing accounted admirable in a man, but despicable in a woman. Up to four months ago Leigh had come as near fulfilling the saying, "never had an ache or a pain in his life," as it is humanly possible for the human animal to do; but suddenly he had been beset by inertia, indecision, headaches, twinges which the doctors called gout, rheumatism, neuritis, and someone had finally suggested teeth.

His mouth had just become accustomed to the eight uneasy tenants with which his dentist had supplied him, when a tooth in the upper jaw began to ache abominably. Only this morning, against the advice of his dentist, he had had it removed without the aid of an anesthetic, and he had not yet recovered from the shock of pain and discomfort.

He had tried to excuse himself from the dinner, but Bess Tleson, with the callousness of an avuncular aunt—at least she had married his uncle—had refused to release him.

"I'll put you next somebody who won't care whether you talk or not," she promised.

But he hadn't expected her to live up to the letter of her promise so literally, and after a few moments, he rather rudely turned his back on the steady stream of Florrie's talk and smile and made some moody comment to Mrs. Styles, who turned instantly, her dark attentive eyes upon his lips.

"You are not eating," she said, a smile hovering on the fine, long-drawn corners of her mouth.

"I can't; it's this confounded tooth," he grumbled.

Like most healthy men, Leigh was incredulous of his own suffering, and he liked to discuss its sources and panaceas. Mrs. Styles appeared interested, and although it was scarcely a topic he would ordinarily have chosen for a dinner table, he was soon launched in the details of his case.

"But surely you didn't have those eight teeth removed without gas or novocaine," Mrs. Styles remonstrated.

"Oh, no; I took something *that* time, novocaine. It's wonderful! I didn't feel a thing. I kept my eyes open and watched every move, and I couldn't believe it when they told me they were all out," he replied, absorbed in the phenomenon. "I didn't feel a *thing*; eight of them," he asseverated. "I decided that it wouldn't have hurt very much in the first place, and that's the real reason I refused an anesthetic to-day," he made a rueful face.

"It seems a miraculous discovery. Are there no unpleasant after effects?" Mrs. Styles inquired.

"None, except that your lip feels numb and big as a house for a little while. It is different from the old freezing process. It causes a sort of paralysis, you know."

One of the most surprising things about Leigh was his fund of exact information on unexpected subjects, and he had looked up not only the formula of novocaine but its history as well.

"It's been used for a long time in a crude form," he explained. "Some forty years ago a fellow by the name of Deane experimented with something of the sort, but he got into trouble with the authorities and had to clear out."

He was surprised to see one of Mrs. Styles' beautiful, long, white hands suddenly close convulsively around the stem of her goblet.

"Did you say Deane?" she asked.

"Yes," Leigh replied. "A quack doctor, never licensed to practice, although they weren't very particular about those things then, but he used the drug with disastrous results to one or two of his patients, and the profession got after him, although they admit now that the germ of the idea was his discovery. . . . But what a thing for me to talk about. . . . Do forgive me."

"Ah, but I'm interested, really," she protested, "and do you know, I believe I once knew Deane . . . but I never knew he had been given any credit."

"How remarkable! What became of him?"

"Oh, he wandered all over the country . . . all over the world in fact.



He took up with some religious cult and died out in India, but I didn't hear of it until he had been dead twenty years," and at Leigh's bright, interested glance, she smiled slowly. "Yes, it's a story, and d'you know, I believe I'd like to tell you about it. . . . Come and see me some time. I believe you'd understand Jarvis Deane."

"Jarvis Deane . . . what a name! Of course he'd have a story. I've an idea it will be interesting."

"I've an idea it will interest *you*," she emphasized with her delicate, her disarming flattery.

## II

BEFORE Leigh called on Mrs. Styles, he asked his aunt, Bess Tleson, to tell him something about her old friend.

"Well," she began with a ruminative air, "you know, of course, that we were girls together in Cape Bateaux, the little Mississippi river town where we were both born. As a matter of fact, I'm about six months older than Myra, although you'd never think it," Bess grinned like a naughty old flapper as she crossed her knees and reached for a cigarette.

With some malice Leigh presented a lighted match. He knew she hated to smoke.

"Thanks, not now," she shook her head. "I don't believe anybody really *likes* it," she added drily, and it suddenly occurred to Leigh that he couldn't imagine Mrs. Styles smoking, but he was certain that she could very well understand another person's enjoyment of it.

"Dan Styles and your uncle Bob started in business together when they were young men," Bess continued. "For all its romantic name, Cape Bateaux was a horrible little town; there wasn't a redeeming thing about it; even the river flattened out along there into a sluggish stream whose low marshy banks were constantly menaced by flood and overflow. It was hopelessly dull and ugly, but none of us knew it then but Myra. She hated it. She was always threatening to do

something rash like running away with a traveling theatrical troupe, or having a career of some sort. We used to laugh at her; we thought she was awfully affected and sentimental. The boys used to say: 'Myra'd be all right if she didn't have *ideas*.'"

Bess laughed reminiscently. "Well, she married young, we all did forty years ago, and before she was twenty she had the illness that left her partially deaf.

"The Styles moved to the city two years before we did, and when I saw Myra again it seemed to me that she had grown years older than the rest of us. She didn't go out then as she does now, and naturally her life had narrowed down a good deal; she had turned to books and study. . . . You know she's awfully well up on art and music and that sort of thing, not, I suppose," she laughed as she laid aside her unsmoked cigarette, "that you'd call informing yourself on art, music and literature a narrowing process, but you know what I mean."

"Yes, I imagine deafness is more isolating than most afflictions, but it doesn't seem to have shut her out," Leigh replied.

"Well, it hasn't. . . . Sometimes I think it's let her in . . . made her more understanding and that sort of thing. . . . Trouble does sometimes," Bess, who was not subtle, asserted earnestly.

"Yes," Leigh smiled, "but I suspect with her, it was through some process a little less obvious."

"If you mean experience, you're mistaken, because she's lived the most sheltered life possible. Do you remember how Flora Finching described her married life to Little Dorrit?"

"Not ecstasy, but comfort," Leigh laughed aloud.

"Exactly," Bess affirmed. "Dab Styles was good looking, he belonged to a good family; he made money and was always what you'd call a *safe* man."

"Doesn't sound exciting. Did she love him?" Leigh asked.

"How do I know? I don't suppose she knows herself, she married before

she was twenty," old Bess replied grimly, "and you must remember that up to the time they left Cape Bateaux she hadn't been a hundred miles away from the river in her life."

### III

A FEW days later Leigh found himself having tea with Mrs. Styles in her large, high-studded drawing-room, which somehow expressed the personality of its owner. It was in no sense a modern room, nor could it be called old-fashioned. Despite the jumble of mahogany, ebony picked out with gold, faded plush hangings and the black marble mantel, the room had a certain style and distinction; the perfect proportions, the fire whispering on the hearth, books and flowers everywhere, lifted it above its furnishings and gave it a sense of timeliness, of seclusion and peace.

"But if your teeth are easy now, you won't want to be reminded of them by the story of Jarvis Deane," Mrs. Styles smiled, as she handed Leigh his tea.

"But I want to hear the story of Jarvis Deane," he protested. "He'd have to have a story with a name like that."

"I knew you were like that," Mrs. Styles smiled on him contentedly. "However, I shall not be able to throw any new light on the history of novocaine, but you'll see something more than a quack, a vulgar impostor in Jarvis Deane. You'll see. . . . Oh, you'll see lots of things," she promised, as she rested her fine head against the back of her chair, and paused for a moment, arranging her thoughts.

Afterward, it seemed to Leigh that she spoke with the fluent ease of one who had pondered her subject deeply. She told her story in the first person, but was as impersonal as if she were reading it from a book.

\* \* \*

"ONCE, when I was twelve years

old," she began without preamble, "my father took me to St. Louis with him and my older brother, who was going to a military school in Illinois. We went by steamboat, as we called the old, slow, river craft. Two things happened on that trip that affected my whole life.

"We left home about five o'clock in the afternoon and after an early supper, I hung about listening to my father and a group of planters discussing the disappearance of Charley Ross, which had happened a few months before. It was a subject that had aroused my deepest conjecture, and presently catching sight of my face, which no doubt was full of morbid curiosity, my father bade me run away and play, and I wandered off and curled up in a corner where I lay listening to the negroes singing on the lower deck, watching the lights from the boat that lay like long, trembling, yellow fingers on the dark waters of the river. I was thinking about Charley Ross. 'I suppose they're holding him for a ransom, and if that's the case, none of our children is safe from kidnappers,' one of the planters had remarked, and as I recalled it, I started up in sudden panic, fearful for my own safety, when I was arrested by a low laugh on the bridge above me, and a man's warm tenor voice: 'But *he's* a woman, dearest. Didn't you know? George Sand is just a *nom de plume*.'

"How should I know?" a pretty, voice demanded.

"Well, you shouldn't," the caressing voice replied. 'She's what they call an Intellectual, a Free Thinker, ugly as sin, but with a brilliant mind and fascinating to me. . . . She's old now, but in her day she had all the great writers, musicians, artists, politicians in her train. She used them for copy and as soon as she tired of one she took on another, so they say.'

"Jamie!" the pretty voice protested. "How dare you tell me such things. Brilliant! . . . I won't have you reading the horrid creature's books. . . . I don't think it's *nice* . . . and on our

honeymoon, too. . . .’ and a dark object hurtled through the air before me, and I heard a sharp splash as it struck the water.

“‘Oh, dear,’ I thought impatiently, as the voices sank to a low murmur of protest and coaxing. ‘She’s silly. I should think she’d like to hear about a woman with a brilliant mind,’ I liked the adjective. Only, I wondered why she chose such a plain name, George Sand. . . . It sounded hard and gritty. Now a name like Pansy Cliff or Myrtle Dell . . . but my speculations were interrupted by my brother, who pounced upon my hiding place.

“‘Come on,’ he urged. ‘We’re stopping at Burton’s Landing to load hogs. I begged papa to let us stay up and watch them. It’s as good as a circus,’ and he hurried me over to the railing.

“It was quite dark now and we could see nothing of the little settlement lying behind the landing which had sprung to life as flaming torches were thrust into the posts that outlined the shore; and suddenly, with a whirl of black limbs and stamping bare feet, a horde of negroes poured from the darkness, shouting and yelling, leaping about as they brandished long poles, jabbing and pounding at what, in that garish light, seemed a seething mass of strange mythical beasts, which ran hither and thither, stubbornly determined not to be driven down the wide gangway that had been run out from the boat. Occasionally a black giant, stripped to the waist, his body glistening like polished ebony, conscious of the spectators on the upper deck, would leap upon the heaving backs of the animals and run across them, executing a few weird dance steps with back-thrown head exposing flashing teeth and grinning blue gums. . . . Now and then they would all break into a low crooning chant that rose higher and higher as their black bodies seemed to sway in unison to an invisible wind that swept them, ending perhaps in a peal of blood-curdling laughter or a shower of curses from a white man who was directing the loading. It was savage, threaten-

ing, fantastical and unreal, like a dream . . . and like a dream, suddenly, it was gone. . . . The loading was finished, the negroes were swallowed up in the night . . . the little landing stood lonely and deserted with a single torch accenting the mysterious darkness that seemed to fold around the place like a palpable garment.

“I stood rubbing my eyes, half dazed, when I heard my father’s voice.

“‘Here’s my girl. Time for bed daughter,’ and he laid his hand on my shoulder, as he turned for a last word with a man who sauntered by his side.

“‘Reminds me of Algiers,’ the stranger remarked in a pleasant drawling voice, and as he lighted his cigar the sudden flare of light disclosed a thin weather-beaten face, and a pair of the palest brown eyes I ever saw.

“‘He’s a gambler,’ I thought, with the uncanny intuition children sometimes display.

“‘I saw ’em load steers there last year,’ he continued as he flipped the match over the railing. ‘They bring ’em up over the side of the boat by ropes tied around their horns. You wouldn’t believe how fast those Arabs can load ’em.’

“‘Where is Algiers?’ I asked my father as he tucked me into my berth, and when he told me, I marveled at meeting a person who had traveled so far. ‘He must be pretty rich to go clear to Africa,’ I surmised.

“‘Well, I reckon he likes to consort with the rich,’ my father remarked drily and he laughed when I declared with vehemence; ‘I like traveling. Some day I’m going to Algiers.’

“I never saw that man again. I don’t remember what we did in St. Louis, nor anything about the trip home, and I only tell you all this to show from what insignificant, even sordid, incidents the background of life is filled in. It aroused my imagination about far off places, strange people and customs; it gave birth to curiosity and speculation about achievements and personal relationships. To this day, I never hear the name of Algiers without a

vision of that little landing and the face of the traveler as he lounged at my father's side. I began to think in terms of comparison, and presently it all became personal. If there were strange countries, why shouldn't I see them; if women studied and became famous, why shouldn't I? . . . It made me discontented, and I suspect rather foolish and unwholesome, and I know it worried my father and mother when I begged to go off to school as my brothers had done. 'I like to see a woman keep her innocence,' my father rebuked me sternly as I tried to argue my case, which, freely translated, meant, her ignorance.

"Well, I didn't go off to school. Except for occasional trips to Memphis and St. Louis I didn't go anywhere. There was no railroad at Cape Bateaux and our only means of egress was by bus or boat. I hated it. 'Some time I'm going to Algiers!' I used to say in my fierce and futile rebellion. It became a threat and a promise.

"The spring I was seventeen my oldest brother, Phipps, finished college. He had made a brilliant record, and secretly he sympathized with my ambitions, although he didn't dare openly espouse my cause. But he and Thad, my younger brother, shared my discontent with Cape Bateaux and the narrow opinionated views of our associates, and the boys used to arouse the displeasure of my father and the anxiety of my mother by frequenting the society of some of the river men and old Major Booth who was an atheist and a Republican.

"'Anybody can be a Democrat, but it takes courage and a real conviction to be a Republican in Cape Bateaux,' Thad would say with sarcasm that silenced my father who sometimes questioned the wisdom of giving his sons an education superior to his own.

#### IV

"ONE day the boys came home full of stories of an interesting young fellow they had met over in Drayton,

our nearest large town and the countyseat.

"'He quotes Latin with a strong Kansas accent,' Phipps laughed, 'spouts Shelley, knows some of Shakespeare's plays by heart, talks about Hannibal and Tiberius as if they were old pals of his, and he never even heard of Washington Irving.'

"'There's something pathetic about that fellow,' Thad, who was sensitive, declared. 'He'll talk about everything from politics to ancient religions, which seem to interest him particularly. He's crazy about poetry and foreign countries and outlandish people and customs; he's a dreamer and a scientist.'

"'Scientist! quack-quack-quack.' Phipps squawked derisively.

"'Yes, *scientist!*' Thad affirmed. 'He may look and act like a mountebank, but I'll bet my last dollar that fellow has discovered something, only he's so uneducated and so impracticable that he'll never be able to perfect it.'

"'What has he discovered?' my father inquired.

"'Oh, some painless method of pulling teeth. He's traveling around the country with a little troupe in an open cart giving free concerts to attract a crowd. . . .'

"'The companions you seek!' my father interrupted angrily, 'and after giving you a college education . . . !' he added with bitterness.

"A FEW days later a party of us drove over to Beaver Dam and ate supper under the trees. We came home after dark by way of Drayton, and as we drove through the town we saw an open cart drawn up at one side of the village square. A little organ stood in one end of the cart and a large plush covered dentist's chair in the other. The centre was occupied by a boy with blackened face who executed a buck and wing dance to the accompaniment of the organ and a banjo. The cart was lighted by a flaming gas torch and the light fell on the up-turned faces of the spectators giving them a blanched, spectral aspect.



"We drew up beside the curb and we all began to giggle as the dancer finished with a flourish and a prodigiously tall figure arose from behind the organ and strode to the edge of the cart, sweeping the audience with a theatrical and melancholy gaze from his deep-set eyes. He was young, younger than Thad, but he was dressed in a ridiculous ministerial fashion. A long, full-skirted frock coat was buttoned tightly across his breast. His hair sprang in a bushy mane beneath the huge wide-brimmed hat that accentuated the size of his head. For a long moment he held the audience in an expectant silence. I leaned eagerly far out of the buggy and as his eyes for a moment met mine, I felt my heart beating faster, and suddenly I recalled that night on the Mississippi River when we stopped at Burton's Landing.

"Presently he began to speak in a powerful, organ-like voice. 'Kind friends, I shall sing to you; I shall tell you of my great scientific discovery; I shall give three free demonstrations, of the futility of needless suffering,' and at a wave of his hand the organist played the opening bars of an accompaniment, and after a dramatic pause, the singer began in an untrained, passionate voice, 'A story I'm going to tell. . . .'

"'Oh let's go on,' some one of our party urged, and we drove away amidst the protests of the girls who declared they wanted to hear that story.

"That was the first time I ever saw Jarvis Deane.

"WELL, I saw him often enough in the next two weeks. He made a circuit of the surrounding towns with Drayton as headquarters. My father was away a good deal and the boys were idle, bored and restless. They didn't take Jarvis Deane very seriously, but they spent most of their time with him, and they used to tell me of their talks. They had good-natured discussions about everything, religion, politics, poetry, art; all the questions the

world needed settled for its easement. I had never heard the name of Praxiteles until I heard it on Jarvis Deane's lips and he had never been west of the Rockies nor east of the Mississippi River in his life. But that comes later.

"There was one subject that my brothers confessed they had to handle warily, his profession, or rather his 'scientific discovery,' as Jarvis Deane always naïvely termed it. He possessed a profound conviction that he had made a discovery that would revolutionize not only dentistry, but all surgery, and something in his attitude compelled their respect.

"One night when father had gone down the river to buy cotton the boys asked Jarvis Deane to bring his troupe over to our house and give a concert. They bore down my mother's weak protests, and I invited all of our young friends in to see the fun.

"On their arrival, the boys of the troupe were uneasy and embarrassed, and so were we, but Jarvis Deane was the most self-possessed person there. His sincere and simple pride in the program he had arranged somehow abashed us and gave the performers confidence.

"I suppose life was dull for my mother, but we didn't realize it, and after her first half-scandalized disapproval, she enjoyed the stir of excitement and joined us in urging Jarvis to sing, and he thrilled us with 'Blue Alsatian Mountains,' 'Heart Bowed Down' and 'Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep,' old familiar songs, but he gave them a new meaning . . . he brought a breath of something new and strange into our lives. . . . We had a sense of touching a world other than our own.

"I had the reputation of being very daring in my opinions, but when it came to actions I was as timid as the best of them, and tonight I was vexed to find myself shy and breathless at the thought of going up and talking to Jarvis Deane as the other girls did, and as I hovered on the outskirts of the crowd, it hurt my vanity that he made no attempt to speak to me.

"After mother had served some simple refreshments, we all went out on the gallery and danced to the music of the banjos. Jarvis Deane couldn't dance and the girls took turns sitting out with him, giggling and laughing and making fatuous replies to his solemn attempts at conversation.

"Presently he was standing before me. 'This is our dance,' he said in his full, round voice. I had promised it to someone else, but I seemed to go weak, and without a word I followed as he led me down the steps to the garden path.

"I can't dance. Do you care?" he asked.

"No, I don't care,' I replied breathlessly, fascinated, repelled by his strange personality.

"He did not speak again until we reached a little summer house where he turned, and without a word he swept me into his arms and kissed me over and over again, while I, half terrified, clung to him. . . . 'I don't care. . . .' I repeated. 'I don't care for anything.'

"I knew you didn't, you little wild thing,' he whispered. 'But you've the caged look in your eyes that always arouses my fury. . . .'

"Am I different from the others?' I asked.

"Yes, you're different,' he murmured. 'They like their cages; they like to hop about and swing on a little perch, and nibble a seed or two and sharpen their pretty little bills on a bit of cuttle fish . . . but you. . . . I saw you that first night when you drove through Drayton. You leaned forward and as the light fell on your white flower face, my heart leaped. . . . 'She's mine!' I thought swiftly. . . . I didn't know whether I'd ever see you again or not, but you'd be none the less mine for that. But now I found you, and you're going to be free.'

"But suppose I'm like the others,' I argued, only half-comprehending his grandiloquent phrases. 'Suppose I like my cage. . . .'

"But you don't. Nothing that is mine can remain caged.'

"This didn't strike me as arrogant or absurd. I was past thinking with any sense of coherence.

## V

"For the next ten days or so," she went on, "we met constantly, but no one ever knew it; no one has ever known it until this day. Sometimes I would steal out before daybreak. . . . Jarvis wanted to show me the sunrise; sometimes I would creep out after everyone was asleep. Twice we spent the whole day in the woods by Beaver Dam. His appearance no longer struck me as ridiculous. He was one of those persons who look natural in outlandish garb and unusual surroundings. It was a strange relationship. . . . After that first night he never so much as held my hand as we wandered through the woods or sat by the little river above the dam. Sometimes he read aloud—Shelley, Byron, Tennyson. He talked to me of astronomy and Greece, and I suspect he knew about as much of one as he did of the other, but he excited my curiosity; he made them realities to me. I told him about my trip to St. Louis when I was twelve, and he understood exactly what I had meant when I said 'Some day I'm going to Algiers.' He told me about George Sand and Liszt, Chopin and de Musset; he made it a story of beauty and romance. When he spoke of his discovery, he was transfigured.

"It's imperfect yet. In other hands it could even be dangerous,' he confessed with his colossal, his naïve conceit, 'but it's going to revolutionize surgery. It's going to do away with suffering!' he declared with emotion, and when I suggested that he ought to protect himself against infringement, he shamed me by declaring proudly that he was a scientist, a humanitarian, not a peddler.

"One night I met him at the edge of town and we climbed the hill to the old cemetery. As we reached the entrance Jarvis leaned against the gate. As I said,

our relationship was strange, almost impersonal. When I was away from him I did not think so much of him as of the dreams, the strange new vistas his words evoked, but I always felt small and helpless under his penetrating gaze.

"For a long time he held my eyes, then he said abruptly: 'I'm leaving this part of the country tomorrow. I'm going to cross the river and work my way East. Are you coming with me, Myra?'"

"'Tomorrow!' I gasped . . . 'but . . . but you can't. . . .' I felt as if a grave had opened at my feet.

"'Are you coming with me, Myra?' he repeated dramatically.

"'How . . . how can I?' I stammered.

"'How can you *not*?' he asked gravely. 'Do you mean that you *want* to stay here?' and he waved his long hand in a sweeping gesture at the little town which lay like a blot at the foot of the hill.

"'No. . . . I don't know. . . ."

"'Do you think I could stop here? Do you think I could *stop* any place? I'm on my way East now. . . . Then, there's the ocean to cross; mountains to climb; strange lands and people to visit; new languages to learn. . . . I'm going to *Algiers*! . . . Look, the whole world's to find, and I'm asking you to help me seek it.' There was no scorn in his voice, only a tragic sorrow. He leaned over and tipped my chin up in his hand, and he laughed softly. 'I believe you're afraid you'll go hungry. Why girl, I cleared over forty dollars last month, after I paid off the boys. I reckon we won't starve.' Even to my unsophisticated mind forty dollars did not seem a princely sum, but I didn't care. . . . I was only seventeen and he was the first person I had ever met in my life who cherished a dream.

"He didn't say a word about marriage. I don't think we either of us thought of it. It was a spiritual passion to which bodily functionings bore no relationship at all.

"When I left him that night I didn't know whether or not I'd promised to meet him in Drayton the next day. I know he did not urge it; he simply offered me the chance.

"Well, I went. Jarvis would not leave Drayton until evening, and I waited until afternoon and went over in the hotel bus which reached there about five o'clock. Jarvis met me on a side street with one of the boys of the troupe whose conscious eyes could not meet mine as he took my bag and carried it back to the hotel. For the first time I felt ashamed.

"'Oh, Jarvis, let's get away soon,' I begged, but his face was worried, as he replied gently:

"'They've sent for me out at Dwyer's Gulch. A woman there has been suffering for days. It won't take me an hour and I know you'll be my brave girl and wait until my return. I won't stop for supper as I've promised the boys that we'll give a little farewell concert on the square before we go. But everything is packed and we'll start early. I'll send the boys ahead with the cart and we'll go in my buggy. . . . There's a moon tonight and we're starting for Algiers.' He smiled at me with such wistful anxiety that I was ashamed to show my disappointment and dismay, but I had a horribly let-down feeling as I waited in the stuffy hotel parlor, pretending to read a book. I was well known in Drayton, but in our stupendous innocence, I don't think the thought of detection occurred to us.

"About six o'clock I tried to choke down the dreadful food placed before me by a frowsy girl I had known at school. At a table in one corner of the room, the boys of the troupe sat eating noisily. I saw them whispering together and I felt their furtive eyes upon me. 'Do they know? Shall I have to associate with them?' I questioned fearfully.

"Driven by a sudden trepidation that I did not attempt to analyze, I wandered about the village streets, and presently hearing the twang of a banjo, I knew

that Jarvis had returned and the concert was in progress.

"I went over to the square and stepped into a doorway where I stood unobserved. Except the time Jarvis had brought his troupe to our house, I had never seen him under a roof. I had never again seen him in the company of other persons. I knew nothing of his antecedents, his personal habits, his manner of living. I had no real idea of the application of his scientific discovery," and I watched with curiosity, as I saw him rise and step to the edge of the cart, sweeping the gaping crowd with a commanding gaze.

"'Before I sing tonight,' his powerful voice rang out, 'I shall give two free demonstrations,' he shook two fingers above the heads below him, 'two and two only—the last I shall give in this community. If anyone in this audience has been suffering from an aching tooth, I will remove it, using my great, scientific discovery, which will make the operation absolutely painless. Two free demonstrations; two and two only!' For the first time he sounded commonplace, not to say common, and before the words were well out of his mouth, a little negro was scrambling over the side of the cart. Jarvis lifted him into the chair, made a jab at his open mouth, and swiftly extracted the tooth.

"'Did it hurt?' he demanded, and the little negro stopped coughing and sputtering long enough to grin, 'Nebber felt nuffin!' The next patient was an old, old man, and I felt a sudden rise of nausea and horror as I saw Jarvis touch the withered lips. I was going away . . . out into the world to seek adventure. . . . I was perhaps even going to Algiers, but I was going *with him*. . . . The real significance of it had not struck me before.

"I turned and ran back to the hotel, and as I stumbled up the steps I met Dan Styles, the boy from home that I married less than a year later.

"'You must take me home, Dan,' I cried clutching his arm. 'I've got to go.'

"'I wasn't going until later,' Dan began doubtfully. 'Did you miss the bus?'

"'Yes, I've got to go *now*.' I urged desperately.

"'All right,' he agreed. 'I suppose your mother will be worried.'

"If he was surprised at the appearance of my bag, he didn't show it, and he was so kind, so thoughtful of my comfort, so *safe*, that I could have gone on my knees to him in thankfulness.

"As we drove away from the hotel, I said tremblingly, 'Can't we go by the side road? There's such a crowd in the square,' and it seems almost too pat to say that as we turned into the road toward home, I heard Jarvis' strong, clear voice beginning, 'A Story I'm Going to Tell. . . .'

"I never saw him again.

## VI

"I SUPPOSE," Mrs. Styles spoke slowly, her long sculptured hands stroking the arms of her chair, "that everyone once in his life does one thing that makes everything that happens afterward of no consequence, or everything becomes of consequence. . . . Strange how a thing that would strike most people as a vulgar little episode, or an escape from sordid disaster, could fill a long quiet life full of adventure. Perhaps it would have been different if deafness had not come upon me when I was so young, but it has sent me gypsying all over the world. I've never heard of a great scientific discovery that I haven't felt the thrill of achievement; I've never read a great book, looked at a picture or heard a magnificent orchestra—I can hear music, you know—without a sense of ownership. I can't *do* a thing but it's made me creative," she finished triumphantly.

"It's made you adorable," Leigh declared. "Jarvis Deane fulfilled himself in you. He was never more than an abstraction to you but he set you free."

"Poor Jarvis," Mrs. Styles' dark eyes grew luminous as she gazed before



her. "He craved freedom, and yet, I suspect he was bound to the Wheel more securely than most of us."

"Of course one doesn't have to go seeking freedom. Leave the door open and the whole world will come into the cage with you," Leigh declared sententiously. "Saves a lot of gadding about, too," he finished humorously.

"Yes," Mrs. Styles replied evasively, "Still, it's nice to gad," and she gave him a droll glance that wiped away her loop of age and gave her face the sudden charm of the incalculable. "There are times, my dear, even yet, that I'd like to gad . . . or at least I wish I could remember that . . . well, that I had once really gone to Algiers. . . ."



## Summer Moon

*By Abigail Cresson*

O H, Moon, you should not shine at all  
On such a night as soft as silk,  
When every flower breathes sweet perfume  
And the wind is honey and milk.

For in your shining I forget  
How prim and prudent I should be—  
I've pulled my shoes and stockings off,  
My feet are bare for you to see;

And I am dancing like a faun  
Where grass is thick and wet with dew;  
And I am thinking mad, wild thoughts  
And singing them because of you.

The lad that I loved yesterday  
I think I have forgotten quite;  
Some slender Puck shall have my heart  
If he will dance with me tonight—

Some woodland sprite with pointed ears  
And long green eyes that slant and shine—  
So, if you love me, send a cloud,  
And send it quickly, lad of mine,

To blot this silver beauty out  
And make me sure and sane,—and then  
Who knows? I may put on my shoes  
And learn to love *you* once again!



# A Case in Economics

By Morris Gilbert

“I T should be Graves with this filet,” said my friend, “thoroughly chilled in an ice-encrusted glass. But let us be thankful for a little Chablis in this barbarous era. John always puts a pint aside for me whenever it comes in, and it’s almost worth what it costs.”

He approached the filet, but laid his fork down without eating.

“It’s the economics of the thing that are principally falsified by Prohibition,” he said. “The values of living are all askew. We consider, for instance, the filet an adjunct to the wine instead of the wine an adjunct to the filet. . . .”

He was silent and ate for a few moments. Then—

“There’s nothing for the meat except a highball or two,” he said apologetically. “Do not imagine a vain thing.”

“I am content,” said I. . . .

Presently we took our Paragas into the lounge.

“Now here’s a case of the falsity of the economics of Prohibition,” my friend said then. “There is a night club in New York which we will call the Club de Maintenant. It flourishes on the verge of a gallant neighborhood and its doors are never closed to the elect. Half after four in the morning is possibly its most populous and diverting moment. Its clientele consists of all sorts and conditions—buyers for the garment trades, men of leisure and plenty, a collection of the franc-tireurs of the Tenderloin (the expression is antiquated but the location of the club is in the middle of where the old Tenderloin used to be). There are taxi-drivers, desultory parties of ubiquitous news writers, one or two immaculate

but authentic thugs—I am told you can order crimes with your drinks there—innocents from the provinces, and young men from the various colleges in the train of one or another of the young persons they used to meet in larger days in the cabarets a little further uptown.

“Drinks cost a dollar apiece there, and all are pretty bad. The gin is worse than the Scotch, the Scotch is worse than the rye, the rye is worse than the beer, and the beer is worse than the absinthe. That is so possibly because the original authority of absinthe withstands cutting a little better than less potent beverages, but that is a vague theory that I don’t vouch for. At any rate, the absinthe is best.

“The least speculation in the eye brings a girl forthwith to your table. Her duties, obviously, are to inveigle drinks out of you to the greater glory of the cash register. She brings her friends to the table at the smallest provocation, and one and all supply what passes for amiable chat as long as the rounds of drinks come round. She and her friends, of course, can be approached for other projects. On that score, *chacun a son gout*.

“I must romance a bit about the fellow I’m going to tell you about. I say ‘romance,’ but I think there’s enough truth in the deductions I make to permit them to pass as quite exact for the purposes of the moral of this little tale.

“When we came in this fellow was sitting at a small table across the room with a girl. She was one of the extraordinarily pretty and seductive types that seem to flourish in spite, as it were, of their environment. She was Irish,

I judged, blue-eyed and dark-haired, winsome and graceful.

"Not so the young man—second-generation Scandinavian, I should call him. Undernourished, evidently. Pasty of face, meager of body, a waiter or dish-washer somewhere, probably; a feeble product.

"Now here come in the economics of the case. The young man, capable perhaps of earning \$25 a week at best, had sat at the table with the girl we'll call Sheila, most all evening. The outlay must have been, for him, prohibitive. Ten drinks for each, at least—that's \$20, beside some food, maybe—\$5 more. You see it was Prohibition's fault. The young fellow was up against a system he couldn't beat.

"But \$25 doesn't do more than half cover the expenditure the young man contemplated, because he invited Sheila to go elsewhere with him presently, and Sheila said she would. This we learned later. As a matter of fact, Sheila told us later, the young man, as an earnest of good faith displayed to Sheila his pocketbook, where there was a sufficiency of bills to hold her attention. This action, if I were telling the story to arouse the emotions, is particularly naïve and poignant in view of what happened afterward. . . . Like the foolish stranger who shows how many cartridges he has in his pistol. . . . But after all there wasn't any more persuasive thing he could have done, at that." . . .

A waiter approached with a tray, a square bottle, and two little glasses.

"Triple Quintreau sec!" I cried. "Why, this is fabulous."

"My own," said my friend. "I keep it in my locker." The waiter handed him a key, then poured with ceremony.

When he was gone my friend continued.

"Now," he said, "to prove the point we must take for granted that the sum this chetif young man was spending had been saved with considerable pain and privation over a considerable period of time. Perhaps, as I said, merely a dishwasher—perhaps a simple struggling dip whose fingers had poached

with exceptional results after a time of dearth or sharp-eyed police supervision. This, we must believe, was his night, his blue moon.

"So. . . .

"The sprightly glances of our party—you must understand that its members had an appearance of well-being that the young man in question failed to share either in raiment, physique, or manner—the party's glances. I say, fastened themselves with a particular interest upon Sheila. She was the prettiest girl in the room, she was desirable.

"Events then began to move quickly. It was soon seen that Sheila and the fellow were about to go away. She was gathering up her vanity case, he was finishing paying his check. The manager—a friend of one of our group—happened to be at our table at the moment.

"The couple strolled toward the door where the young man halted while Sheila went toward the back of the room to get her hat and probably powder her nose. At the same time one of our group spoke to the manager.

"'That's a pretty girl,' he said.

"'Do you want her over here at your table,' inquired the manager. It was a natural question for him to ask. He saw two customers leaving, one of them a means of attracting more custom. It was purely economic, you see. As I have mentioned, we gave the appearance of moderate affluence.

"Someone told the manager, 'Yes.' and he stepped over to where the girl was standing. After a moment's conversation, she and the manager approached our table. Her former escort was still standing at the door.

"What followed, followed quickly. We were at once immersed in introductions of a sort, so we missed some of the fine points. The manager stepped to my side—the girl had gone round to the other side of the table—and presented me. I was the second man he named.

"I bowed over Sheila's hand, and as I straightened, the corner of my eye caught the trail of a swift parabola that

flashed beside me and a little over my head. There was a crash. I looked up and saw the manager with arms raised warding off the descent of a chair which was splintering about his head. Still holding the back of the chair stood our young man, close by.

"The next half minute was a hiatus in life. The violence attempted seemed to clog thought, speech, action. An uncanny hush was on the room. I noted without any real perception that everybody around the tables had risen to their feet, solemnly, silently, as if in reverent tribute to a great name. In the midst of the vacuity the young man strolled casually and slowly, as it seemed to me, to the door and vanished.

"His vanishing released a hairspring, and an explosion of talk ensued. It was ascertained that the manager was not injured and three young men almost immediately put on their caps and went nonchalantly out. Everyone sat down again, and we ordered a round of drinks." . . .

My friend paused and threw away his cigar. He leaned back with the air of the raconteur whose tale is told.

"But," said I, after a moment. "If the place is the sort you say it is, I don't see how the young man escaped without trouble."

"Oh, I forgot to mention that," said my friend. "As a matter of fact I didn't learn what happened until some weeks afterward. He didn't. The three chaps who went out saw to that thoroughly. The young man, outside, was all but crucified. You will note in that the delicacy of the host's mind. It was not *convenable* that we should know at the time."

"What courage," I said, "to swing that chair in the den of his enemies. Without a friend to his back, he assaulted."

"Yes, the frenzy of courage," said my friend, "or the courage of frenzy."

There was another silence.

"And how horribly unjust the whole thing was!" I cried. "Put yourself—"

My friend raised his hand with a soft gesture.

"There's an inimical quality in life itself, sometimes," he said. "But that wasn't precisely the point I was making. I told the story simply as a case in economics. . . ."



STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, OF SMART SET

Published monthly at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1923.

STATE OF NEW YORK }  
COUNTY OF NEW YORK } ss.:

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Eltinge F. Warner, who having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of the Smart Set, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit: 1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business manager are: Publisher, Smart Set Company, Inc., 25 West 45th St., New York City; Editors, George Jean Nathan and H. L. Mencken, 25 West 45th St., New York City; Managing Editors, George Jean Nathan and H. L. Mencken, 25 West 45th St., New York City; Business Manager, Eltinge F. Warner, 25 West 45th St., New York City. 2. That the owners are: Smart Set Company, Inc., Eltinge F. Warner, George Jean Nathan and H. L. Mencken, 25 West 45th St., New York City; Perkins-Goodwin Co., 33 West 42nd St., New York City. Stockholders of Perkins-Goodwin Co. are: El F. Crowe Estate, F. W. Westlake, S. Goodman, J. A. Brady, Louis Calder, John Atkins, W. F. Anders, C. W. Rantoul and C. T. Rue, all of 33 West 42nd St., New York City. 3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: George Jean Nathan and H. L. Mencken, 25 West 45th St., New York City; El F. Warner, 25 West 45th St., New York City; Perkins-Goodwin Company, 33 West 42nd St., New York City. 4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholders or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements, embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 29th day of September, 1923. (Signed) El F. WARNER, Business Manager.  
My commission expires March 30, 1924. [SEAL] A. W. SUTTON, Notary Public.



# The Married Man

*By Arthur Fitzgerald*

**H**E sat in the great station, waiting for the train to pull in. His wife, he knew, would be surprised to see him. She would never expect him to be in the station, waiting to greet her.

He sighed. It was too bad, he thought, that no such anticipation on her part could be entirely natural.

The events of her absence drifted through his mind in a dull, disillusioning panorama. He recalled his inward, even his almost outward, pleasure at her going—it was so opportune; it gave him the freedom for his "affair." All that was behind him now—a disappointment!

In these moments he went over the incidents of his earliest acquaintance with Gloria. First, the accident of the taxi-cab—they had both hailed the same driver. He had not observed the woman, she had failed to see him, until the chauffeur pulled up to the curb and looked in perplexity from one to the other.

At that instant they had stared into each other's faces. He realized the situation, and removing his hat, made her a gesture of apology.

"There's so much confusion here, so much noise," he said. "I didn't see you beckoning this fellow at all. Please take the cab; I can wait. There'll be another along very soon."

Then she smiled.

"I'm awfully sorry," she said. "And I'm not at all sure that you'll find another soon . . ."

She still hesitated, she still smiled. She was surely charming! Certainly not an American woman—she was

Spanish or French, he thought. She was slim and rather tall, with immense, dark eyes, full of potential expression. Her abundant hair seemed to protest the bounds of her little red turban; it coiled about her ears in jetty curves; it fell in a great, jet knot at the nape of her slender neck.

At that instant, his courage for an infidelity was established. Her entire difference from Louise, whose every thought and gesture was the commonplace of each of his days, gave her an immediate mystery, and fanned up an old forgotten flame. There returned to him now the indefinable lure of women, the promise of their vague mysteriousness, the old wanting of charm and surprise. And at the same instant, as a corollary to his nascent sensitiveness, he was startled to realize that this old delight, this charm of the unexpected, had so long laid dormant. Louise and he, married, had been living in an interminable mediocrity of emotion, with all the little, intimate discoveries made months and years ago.

The woman faltered with a slim foot poised on the step of the taxi. He took an immediate determination.

"No doubt we're going in the same direction," he said. "Suppose we ride together! I'll take you wherever you say and then this fellow can drive me on to the place I'm going. That settles the whole problem!"

She consented at once. They sat down in the cab together. Almost at once they began to scrutinize each other, ask questions, become acquainted.

This was the beginning, an initiation

of subtle, invigorating promise. For weeks it had made him young again, it gave him old delights, returned old hopes. The illusions of romance were back in his senses. Forgotten expectancies sent a renewed glamour into his hours.

Now, in the station, waiting for Louise, he recalled with a faint, impartial bitterness, what a delusive expectation Gloria had really offered him. He had felt it all before, in all its minutæ, in all its gaudy deceitfulness, especially with Louise—so powerfully in her case that their marriage was the consequence.

Yes, Louise had once been a mystery, a creature of unfathomed subtleties, with the same deceptive allure, with the same power to arouse indefinite, yet profound wantings. He acknowledged this now with an ironic smile.

Yet only a few weeks before, when she had gone away on her trip, he was still in ignorance. There had been no time to disillusion himself, and with the departure of his wife he had looked forward to a few weeks of an intimacy that would make lyrics of the hours. What a mistake! What a delusion!

It took less than a week to plumb Gloria's insufficiency. Her smile, repeated a hundred times in a single day, lost its suggestiveness. He fathomed the secrets of her synthetic complexion and thereafter saw her face as it was, beneath the overlaid cosmetics—too pale, a little haggard, and somewhat sallow. Her slenderness was accentuated; she was thin; a harsh one to embrace.

Moreover, she developed an unforeseen petulance; they did not quarrel, but he understood that a short time would easily bring them to that. And her variability annoyed him, inasmuch as he could never predict her mood. She gave him no ease; she brought him no calm.

His thoughts were curtailed by the sight of a stream of hurrying people that now emerged from the gate. Smiling, he stood up, scanning each face. Even a certain anxiety assailed him then; he was afraid that in some way Louise might not be on the train.

But now he saw her, walking behind a porter, composed as always, restful. She was not looking for him and so, for a moment, she did not catch his eye. Then he passed through a few seconds of quick comprehensions. Even in the seconds when her face lighted with surprised pleasure at his presence, his mind was detached, orientating itself to his new understanding.

The regrets of the past few weeks were gone. His "affair" was a useful thing after all, not a fiasco, not a waste of good time. The smart of disappointment was assuaged. Even his irritation with Gloria was softened and, like a vapour, evaporated from his spirits.

She had served to give him an appreciation of Louise and the desiderate composure of their life together. It was perhaps what he needed—perhaps what every married man requires from time to time. He smiled inwardly. What God hath joined together, he thought, let not an obtuse faithfulness put asunder.



**ERR:** To commit a blunder or mistake.

**Errand:** A journey foolishly undertaken for a friend.



# Blindman's Buff

*By Hannah Bryant*

**H**IS work took him out over the city in as many directions as has the wind, yet not so far but that each night found him turning the corner and walking down to his door at the end of the street, as briskly as he had started out that morning. Many other people turned down the street at about that same hour every night, disappearing behind their various doors; for though the street was only a block long, its eight houses and four big tiers of apartments were the nightly refuge of not a little life. But no one walked quite so blithely as he whose work took him out over the city in as many directions as has the wind. Not all the wood he had chopped, nor the walls he had wiped down, nor the floors he had polished, nor the rugs he had beaten, nor the lawn he had mowed, nor the splinters in his hands, nor the dust he had swallowed, could take the benignity out of him.

Behind the many doors which opened to the hands of the many residents of the street, there were to be found varying degrees of comforts and conveniences and the embellishment of such things. There were arm-chairs, divans before fireplaces, walls with pictures, tables with books, lamps with shades that had yellow breath; and perhaps congeniality and laughter and occasional singing. But none of this had given the feet of the people who opened such doors so great a pride of motion as that which he possessed, who walked every night to the end of the street, went in a basement door, stoked a furnace for the family upstairs, and in a small

room opening off the furnace room, cooked his own dinner and went to bed.

He liked going to bed early; he liked pulling shoes off feet that were tired not of life but of leather soles; he liked the first plunge into the soft lumpiness of his bed and the passing—which was rather like an experience in a game of Blindman's Buff—unthinkingly into sleep. At about this time other residents of the street were opening doors again or sitting down to their nights. And many of these others were thinking, consciously or unconsciously, "How shall I make the most of the next few hours, where shall I go, what shall I do to justify myself, how propitiate this thing, time, which sweeps past me like a river, taking and giving, and taking more than it gives?" And some of them were going up the street and moving out into the dark to lose themselves in the depths of their emotions, while he, who liked to go to bed early, was engaged in pleasantly misunderstanding himself among his dreams.

He also liked to get up early. To face the day was an interesting experience if for no other reason than to find out whether this or that patron wanted him to beat rugs that day or only polish floors. He was the earliest riser on the street. Often he would go out to the front of the house and take a long fulfilling look up and down the street. And looking north, he was really looking north and not into his past; looking south, he was not peering into his future but really into the south, wondering perhaps what the clouds augured in the way of weather. The neighborhood was very quiet at that hour; the

## BLINDMAN'S BUFF

houses suggested a row of tombs; the very grass in the grass plots, matted down with dew, seemed affected with sleep. It was as though the cold breath of those who slept behind the windows that opened onto the street—the many who, possessing pasts, even futures, were endeavoring to sleep off the inhibition of such things—had charged the air with heaviness.

He who had nothing to sleep off, did

not remain long in front of the house thinking about the weather, even though the weather was likely to be the determining factor as to whether he was that day to mow a lawn or wipe down walls. For there was much to be done: there was the furnace again, and breakfast to be cooked over a pleasant stove, and there was the process of eating, of washing up, and there was the day's work, and there was the wind.



## On Art and the Artist

*By Parker Ford*

### I

**T**O be imperishable, a work of art need not be truthful. That is to say, it need contain no doctrine of inexpugnable veracity. Form is eternal but truth—it is a function of necessity.

### II

I doubt the existence of the mute, inglorious Miltons. Nearly all men labor at what pleases or suits them. Charles Lamb was a clerk, but it is doubtful that many clerks have wasted their lives at a desk when they might have been great artists. The artist born is not mute. He will speak.

### III

It is held by some that the artist finds his more authentic materials in the current spectacle. He should draw, it is said, upon the life that presents itself to his eyes. Is this true? Which then is the more important—Caesar's Commentaries or Virgil's *Æneid*?

### IV

Every now and then some socialistic reformer, lasciviously masquerading as a Carmen, throws a flower to the artist and whispers seductively

of the possible renaissance of art under socialism. But capitalism and socialism are identical faiths—the glorification of material values. The artist need hope for nothing from either. He must discover his support among those whose preoccupation with material values has become enfeebled—among those who attribute more importance to a peerless sonnet than a gilt-edge security.

### V

Irony and cynicism—they are good attitudes for the artist, but they must not be postured too persistently. The artist may carry his ironic doubts so far, and then, abruptly, he must begin to believe. That is to say, he must believe in art; once the illusion of its importance is lost, he ceases to be an artist.

### VI

Art, then, has its religious aspects, that is to say, its faiths? What! When the artist is so frequently a scoffer at easy truths! But after all, why not? By his faith in the importance of art the artist but reveals his humanity. He follows his instinct. The believing instinct is as natural to man as his physical appetites.



# Monthly Critique No. 180

*By George Jean Nathan*

## I

**I**N the prevailing wild hat-tossing over the genius of the Italian Pirandello I find myself, for all my prolonged efforts at self-hypnosis, unable to share. The reasons for my comparative apathy have been set down in the past, and at considerable length: I need not again go into them in detail. That he is the innovator and highly original talent that his advocates make out, I presume to doubt: I have pointed out before in these pages what seems to me to be the genealogy of his technic. That technic is the dramatization not of a literal theme, but of the aura of that literal theme; not a dramatization of direct character, but of the psychological ectoplasm of direct character. In simpler words, he is the dramatist of a theme's ghost, that emanation from a theme which is but vaguely a part of its corporeal self, which is—paradoxically, yet I believe accurately, speaking—a contradiction of what would, in the instance of another dramatist's creation, naturally go on in the central character's mind. Pirandello builds up his central character, or mouthpiece, with all the conventionality of a Henry Arthur Jones, places him on an imaginary stage, and then enters into a debate with him, taking the negative side. He then dramatizes the central character as two central characters in the body of a single actor, the one conventional Jones character playing synchronously in counterpoint to the Pirandello debating character. This character duet is then placed on the actual stage and set into a framework

composed of the overtones of a conventional Victorian play. The result, for all Pirandello's undeniable skill as a theatrician, is often a bit confusing. His intention is clearer than his accomplishment. He seems ever in the position of a writer who has an excellent idea but who, for all his clear grasp of the idea, is unable to imprison it vividly and exactly in the written word.

Successfully to dramatize vagueness—which is Pirandello's aim—one must be doubly lucid. Successfully to dramatize unintelligibility, one must be distinctly intelligible. And Pirandello is no Ibsen. He is, or rather he impresses me as, an eager and enthusiastic Impressionist from whose palette all save bright red and bright blue paint is missing, and who bravely seeks to make up the shortage of exact shades and colors by reducing the bright red and bright blue with hard Croton water to eight or ten different degrees of spurious pastel. His dramatic red and blue are thus convincing enough, but the rest of his shades are suspect. His characters and his theme get under way in a forthright and plausible manner, but before long their hard breathing begins to obscure their words and logic. Pirandello is always puffing hard to keep up with his theme. That theme, whatever it may be, is pretty certain to be found tantalizingly showing him its coat-tails. Pirandello is essentially, it seems to me, a proficient trick playwright who happens to be an educated man whose education stands disconcertingly in the way of his being completely effective in the practical theatre. His psychological philosophy

is unquestionably well-grounded and sound, but it steps continually on the toes of his measure of dramatic talent. And the impression that one consequently gets from his plays is of an able psychological novelist carrying on a rather difficult and baffled conversation with a Broadway theatrical manager. The play "Come Prima Meglio di Prima," presented locally as "Floriani's Wife," is no exception to the rule. Its characteristic Pirandello effort to realize the intangible, to give dramatic body to a disembodied idea, goes aground on the rocks of a technic that, however valid, has not in Pirandello met its master. But even if it had met that master, the local presentation of the play would have completely ruined the result.

## II

IN "Windows" as in several of his other more recent plays, Galsworthy has set himself to intellectualize the Pinero drama. The result, though not entirely successful—since the intellectualization too often gets in the way of the drama—is at least entertaining. For even on such occasions as one does not admire a Galsworthy play, one has always a comfortable feeling of welcome relief that what one is seeing and what one is listening to is the product of culture, experience and a practised taste. In addition, though Galsworthy sometimes makes a considerable ado over subjects that everyone else has already long before agreed upon, it is always more pleasant to listen to an intelligent man saying nothing than to an unintelligent one trying to say something. Galsworthy frequently says nothing, but he generally says it persuasively, charmingly, inoffensively, and very agreeably. In "Windows" he preaches the doctrine of *laissez faire* without a single new observation or a single novel turn of viewpoint—his approach to the subject is over a road worn down by countless travelers before him—yet the play in the main is

made congenial by the simple force of his skill as a writer and of his own amiable manners. The play, which is padded unconscionably, lies in the revolutionary twin philosophies that a person's character is as unchangeable as the color of his eyes and that danger comes from pitching one's ideals too high. As Galsworthy, since the war broke out, has had a passion for allegory, I should not be surprised to learn from him that his present play, like "The Skin Game" and "Loyalties," is supposed to have its analogy in the post-war European situation, but what I get out of it is chiefly a mild Pinero play with the maid serving dialectics instead of tea and with the other characters discussing action instead of acting. It is all intrinsically dull, yet superficially not dull. It is philosophically dead, yet theatrically alive. The Theatre Guild production is highly commendable, although the casting of Miss Phyllis Povah in the important role of the central woman character was not fortunate.

## III

"CASANOVA," credited to Lorenzo de Azertis, a Spaniard, who is actually Lorand Orbök, a Hungarian, is an interesting play. The production of this interesting play by Gilbert Miller is one of the most thoroughly beautiful things that we have had in the American theatre. Yet this interesting play and this thoroughly beautiful production, representing the combined charm and skill of a literary artist and the taste and talent of a persevering producer, are sent packing by a leading actor so humorously incompetent that it may not be amiss to speculate on the reasons for his selection for a role so important. The actor in question, who plays Casanova as if that character were a cross between Konrad Nachtigal and Kunz Vogelgesang of "Die Meistersinger" and the district attorney in a Broadway mystery slop, is Mr. Lowell Sherman. Sherman's record, up to the time

he was given this role, showed nothing better than several effective performances in cheap box-office melodrama, the particular form of drama in which it is easiest for any actor, especially if he is bad, to give a comparatively impressive account of himself. But such is the genius of a certain arm of New York journalistic theatrical criticism that this mild and obvious *grimacier* and his simply achieved effectiveness in the automatically effective bushwah were amiably confused with a high artistry and were set forth with such bewildering adjectives as also currently entrance the Algonquin Hotel aristocracy in the instance of similarly mild and obvious talents like those of McKay Morris, Lynn Fontanne, Gavin Muir, Helen Gahagan, Tom Powers, Geoffrey Kerr, Roberta Arnold, Winifred Lenihan, Margaret Mower, Dwight Frye, Clare Eames, Sidney Blackmer, Ian Keith, Gareth Hughes and other such pleasant boys and nice girls.

For the past six or seven years Sherman has been giving good performances in roles that no actor who had the mere rudiments of his trade at his command could conceivably fail in, and for this child's play has been eulogized as a master of the histrionic art. If he came out on the stage in Act III with pale blue grease-paint smeared on his face, fell down on the floor, pawed the carpet, rolled over three times, groaned heavily, twitched a leg and then lay still as if he were dead, we were sure to be regaled the following morning with hysterical tributes to his great genius; and if he came out in Act II of some other play doubled up on a cane, cackling, and making faces like Fanny Brice—thus indicating that he had suffered a stroke of apoplexy—the next morning's enthusiasm knew no bounds. Well, after six or seven years of such reviewing hoopla it is not unreasonable to believe that a producing manager—particularly one who, like Miller, spends most of his time in London and is not privy to the local nonsense—might persuade himself

(particularly if he has never seen the hooplaé) that the recipient of the extravagant honors must be at least a competent actor, and one who might be entrusted with a role that a competent actor could act. And it was doubtless a result of this disastrous process of logic that brought Sherman to the role of Casanova, and coincidentally to the ruin of a charming and entertaining play and a brilliantly fine production. Sherman was not miscast by Miller; he was miscast by a long series of undeserved good press notices. The consequences are before us. They should prove instructive to other producers who believe all that they read at the breakfast table.

I have said that "Casanova" is an interesting play. This it is for all the liberties that de Azertis, *né* Orbôk, has taken with the character of the miscellaneous chevalier and the century in which he flourished. Much has been made of these liberties and much critical irony spent by the same souls who willingly swallow whole the accuracy of the Drinkwater wax works, to say nothing of Hamlet, L'Aiglon and Uncle Tom. It is a play which, while undeniably sketchy, oversentimentalized, and at times abruptly disjointed, spins gracefully in the dim late afternoon of a Viennese mood a tale that at its best touches the heights of Rostand's superbly lovely "Last Night of Don Juan" (this in the episode where Casanova finds in each of the three spurious Henriettes traces of the real Henriette and yet of her nothing) and that at its worst (as in the awful baby-cap business of the second act) touches perilously close to Broadway whangdoodle. With an actor like Faversham, or even Basil Rathbone, in Sherman's place, the defects of the play might be made less theatrically obvious, and its moments of beauty heightened. With Sherman, every defect stands out like a resolute fullback. Miss Katharine Cornell is picturesque and proficient, as ever, in the role of the central woman character.

## IV

BERNARD SHAW writes the dramatic criticisms for most of the New York newspapers whenever a Shakespearian production comes along. Though his articles are signed with different names, no one is fooled. The afternoon before such a production all the boys dig out their copies of "Dramatic Opinions and Essays," bone up on what he said about it, and the next morning faithfully repeat his views. This has been going on now for about fifteen years. Every time a reviewer dies or loses his job and another reviewer gets his place, Arthur Brentano automatically instructs the clerk in his dramatic department to wrap up the two Shaw volumes to save time when the new reviewer appears on the run an hour later. With but one exception, Shaw duly wrote all the criticisms of "Cymbeline," with which Sothorn and Marlowe opened their recent season of repertoire, as he wrote all that followed. The one exception was the criticism of colleague Towse, of the *Evening Post*, which was written by William Winter. Obediently, and rightly, following Shaw, all the boys proclaimed "Cymbeline" an exasperating hodge-podge of stale plot, sententious commonplaces and rhetorical fustian—all the boys, that is, who without Shaw to make up their mind for them proclaim "Children of the Moon" a rare literary masterpiece—and then turned to get the newsy note into their reviews by taking a fall out of Miss Marlowe's reading of Imogen's lines. It is true that Miss Marlowe's delivery of Imogen's lines is excessively Wurlitzer; it is true that the reviewers were accurate in their disparagement of her performance. But it is equally true that if Shaw had expressed the opinion that this was the way the lines of Imogen should be read, these same reviewers would have praised Miss Marlowe without stint, and would even have gone so far in their enthusiasm for her conception and interpretation as to have compared her favorably with Genevieve Tobin.

## V

THE acclaim of Gilbert Emery's "Tarnish" as a piece of thoroughly first-rate dramatic writing staggers me quite as much as it does nine-tenths of the persons I know. And this, for all the circumstance that the analogous acclaim of "Children of the Moon," "Ice-bound," "You and I," and several dozens of other jitney epics has got us all pretty well used to such reviewing logic. Emery's play, unless Walter Prichard Eaton, Ernest Boyd and any number of other such ignoramuses (including myself) are going crazy, is extremely mediocre stuff in both plan and execution. It is, true enough, serviceable box-office material and, what is more, it shows periodic faint glimpses of character understanding, but in essence and in its entirety it amounts to little more than the ordinary play of Broadway commerce. It is to be compared in no sense and to no degree with the same author's "The Hero," which had an unmistakable and genuine merit. It is rather an unabashed boob-bumper shrewdly palmed off on a somewhat (but very slightly) higher level of theatrical sophistication and intelligence by its appealing statement of immoral values in terms of moral approbation. I relevantly use the adjectives, of course, in their proletarian sense and with their proletarian implications. This dodge contrives to dazzle a certain portion of the audience into believing that what it would otherwise doubtless promptly recognize as very ordinary stuff is very ordinary stuff only at bottom which has been transmuted into something wonderful and made dramatically august and important. First-rate drama, however, is unfortunately not to be fashioned so easily. Sound merit is not entirely a matter of taking a yellow-back melodrama, tearing off the brilliantly-hued cover, and substituting a more modest one from a more softly pitched form of drama. Nor can the ordinary play of commerce be lifted to the heights by the trick, however adroitly managed, of making the essentially unpopular con-



vincingly popular. This, it strikes me, is what Emery set out deliberately to do and what he has successfully done. He has written a good box-office play, but he has not—he surely has not—written anything more than that. That is, unless all the rest of us are going dotty. Miss Ann Harding, in one of the leading roles, has come in for a heavy dose of journalistic praise. It is a pleasure to report, nevertheless, that she deserves a portion of it.

## VI

"A LESSON IN LOVE" is a bright and witty French farce-comedy written from a stodgy and humorless Anglo-Saxon dramatic point of view. It is essentially a Sacha Guitry play written by Rudolph Besier and May Edginton, the authors of "Secrets." It makes its points by crying instead of laughing. In one of the "Nine O'Clock Revue" shows in London there was a play of this general stripe. Toward the end of it, one of the characters stopped suddenly short in his tracks and, bemoaning the intense lugubriousness of the proceedings and declaring it entirely unnecessary, proposed that the other characters join him in playing it as a comedy. This they did, and the result was a play twice as persuasive, twice as convincing, and twice as sound, as the tragic original. Along toward ten o'clock, I kept wishing that Mr. Faversham would urge his colleagues to try the same device with the Besier-Edginton play. It would have improved it two-fold. For it was at about this time that the stage scene represented a room in the Savoy Hotel, London, overlooking the Embankment, and made the beholder reflect wistfully that just a stone's throw away was the home of Bernard Shaw.

But if ever a fundamentally unconvincing play was made partly convincing by its actors, this is that play. Faversham and Miss Emily Stevens are so extremely credible, their performances so artfully colorable, that the superfi-

cial values they achieve carry the disputable manuscript along to a stage of more or less pleasant plausibility. They confound dulness and almost achieve a ripe interest. That they do not do so fully is surely no fault of theirs. Faversham, of course, is always an effective actor—in some respects, the most effective on our stage. Miss Stevens varies, but she gets better by the year. This is, I believe, the best work that she has ever done. Not a single mannerism of yesterday remains in her work. Never before able to make even remotely *vraisemblant* an episode of lightning love and passion, she here reveals herself suddenly and unexpectedly brilliant in just such a scene. It is a fine performance. Well, well, surprises never end — Holbrook Blinn bewilderingly turns out to be an excellent comedian in "The Bad Man," Jane Cowl comes along a superb Juliet, W. C. Fields flabbergasts us as a first-rate character actor, and now Emily Stevens acts an incandescent love scene better than we have seen an incandescent love scene acted on the American stage since Leo Ditrichstein's first leading woman bit him in the ear!

## VII

FOLLOWING the award of the Pulitzer prize to Owen Davis for his play "Ice-bound" and the award of the Ochs prize to the same playwright for his "Home Fires," comes now news of the award of the Munsey prize to him as well for his latest effort, "The Nervous Wreck." "The Nervous Wreck" is a farce that has been vociferously hailed by the gazettes as being one of the best and funniest ever written and that is pretty poor and dismal. It is not only lacking in humor of any but the stalest kind; it is, further, badly planned and written in that its natural climax (the transformation of the timid nervous wreck into a man of nerve and equilibrium) comes in the first half of the very first act and so rids what follows of even the slightest sort of suspense. The climax to the second act is very largely

a repetition of the episode alluded to in the first half of Act I. The central idea, hardly a vernal one, also figured recently in a Harold Lloyd movie called "Why Worry?"

But whoever wrote the movie made everything out of the idea that Davis has not. I am, surely, no frantic admirer of the Unspeakable Drama, yet "Why Worry?" is as superior to "The Nervous Wreck" as "Baby Mine" is superior to "Why Worry?" In a single scene in the last act, Davis shows some originality. For the rest, his farce is hokum with whiskers. It is, I believe, one of the first requisites of a first-rate farce that its humor be fresh and imaginative, even where that humor is of the slapstick variety. Davis' humor in this farce is made up of Ford jokes, allusions to "the cow's governess," and similar antiques. The leading male role is in the hands of Otto Kruger, who gives a laborious imitation of Harold Lloyd. Miss June Walker is a personable heroine.

### VIII

MOLNAR'S "Launzi" is a sensitive and richly imaginative play, overwritten and periodically lost in the forests of its own fancy, that has been deprived of what theatrical power is inherent in it, at least to a considerable degree, by a curiously irrational presentation on the part of the usually judicious Arthur Hopkins. Confounding an already not too lucid theme by altering its original key-title of "Heavenly and Earthly Love" to a nondescript, casting for the central role of a fragile and delicate eighteen-year-old girl a fully mature actress, pitching no less than two scenes written as comedy in the mood of ominous tragedy and slowing down the action where speed was clearly intended by the author, Hopkins has so clouded the manuscript that few of its brilliant beams are successful in filtering through. The scenery is excellent; the lighting is excellent; the costuming is in taste. But the play itself is blocked at almost every turn. I did not see the

Budapest production, but an Hungarian critical colleague substantiates these views of the one made locally. Hopkins has time and again done the very thing that Molnar, who supervised the presentation abroad, most carefully and shrewdly guarded against.

The play lies in the spectacle of a young girl's perplexity before the incursion into pure and glamorous love of realistic passion, sex and deceit. Reaching for a beautiful ideal that is ungraspable, that is ever invaded by an ugly reality and heartache, she takes refuge in the loveliness of her own indomitable faith and belief—a refuge that leads her eventually into the fantastic peace and comfort of insanity. A mixture of ironic pathos and derisory comedy, flooded with the light of phantasy, the play, through Hopkins' misdirection, becomes largely bad Maeterlinck, although here and there a glimmer of Molnar contrives irresistibly to shoot through enveloping mist to save and enchant the moment.

Miss Pauline Lord is an actress of high talent, but all the talent in the world cannot make her an eighteen-year-old girl again. Her Launzi is ever an adult woman, ever completely out of the scheme of the play and the picture. Her performance is a very good one, but it runs smash into the hard rocks of fact. Miss Adrienne Morrison is superlatively bad as the errant mother. She apparently has not the vaguest conception of the intent of the role, which is frequently written in terms of suave comedy and which she plays with moans, groans, and a lot of narrow-eyed tragic nonsense. (This may all be Hopkins' fault, however; he may have insisted upon the interpretation for which I am condemning the actress.) The young lover becomes cheap and ridiculous in the hands of Saxon Kling. The amusing comedy scene between this character and the mother in the first act is ruined completely by the director's misconceiving it as straight drama. All in all, an engaging play botched. I wonder if Hopkins' old bootlegger is dead?

## IX

THE Grand Guignol under Choisy is not what it was under Maurey. Nor, for that matter, has it ever been quite what certain folk, knowing it only from afar, have persuaded themselves to believe. In all its long history it has never, so far as I know—and I have followed its career with what has been perhaps an unnecessarily close attention—produced a single specimen of absolutely first-rate dramatic writing, although, to be sure, it has produced any number of original and amusing risqué comedies and farces, some sharp, breathless thrillers, and one extremely likable little satiric fantasy, the “Fielles” of Giacosa. Its scenic equipment has always been ordinary. Maurey’s particular forte lay in the achievement on the tiny stage in the Rue Chaptal of a very remarkable atmosphere: in this, the Guignol was exceptional. Maurey, with the crudest sort of scenery and lighting and with a platform of an almost absurd shallowness, managed to get a curiously compelling reality into his presentations that has not been surpassed in the theatre of our time. But Choisy, alas, is no Maurey.

The Guignol has ever been a freak theatre. The little building up the dark alley, with its tin piano and two-by-four bar and hard pews, with its studies in Krafft-Ebing melodrama and its excruciatingly comic dirty bedroom didoes, has long been the mecca of serious criticism off on the loose. One has gone to the Guignol in Paris as one has gone to Madame Tussaud’s in London, or to the female prize-fights in Berlin, or to the opera house in San José, Costa Rica. One has pretty generally had a good time, but one has left one’s critical sense at the hotel. The attempt, therefore, to palm off the Guignol on New York as high art of one sort or another is not without its humors. But, art or no art, it seems a peculiar mismanagement that allowed the Guignol troupe to inaugurate its American season with what are unquestionably among the four very weakest plays in

that troupe’s comprehensive repertoire, to wit, the novelist Hirsch’s bowdlerized piece of sentimentality, “Sur Le Banc,” André de Lorde’s and Pierre Chainé’s ancient “Rat Mort” melodrama that has already been seen here, Charles Méré’s “Une Nuit Au Bouge,” and the strained imitation of Romain Coolus by the MM. Joullot and Rabier called “Le Court Circuit.” To persuade the Guignol to defer to what is presumed to be the American timidity and to delete the very torturing melodrama and risqué farce that have made the institution what it was and is, is akin to bringing over the Moscow Art troupe and persuading it to do “Battling Butler.” The consequence has been to take the edge almost entirely off the venture. It will take a considerable effort, and a far more astute selection of plays, to recapture that edge. It will take Coolus’ “Mirette a Ses Raisons,” Giffaferi’s “La Bienfaitrice,” Aguzan’s “Le Sacrifice,” Hennequin and Basset’s “Nuit d’Amour” and other such piquant naughtinesses to stir up the missing loud laughter, and it will take some new “S.O.S.” or “Sabotage” or “Vitriolé” or “Après l’Opéra” (excellent old Guignol thrillers that have already been done in America in English) to stir up the missing nervous thrills.

## X

SHORTER notices. “The Shame Woman,” by Lula Vollmer, is considerably beneath her “Sun Up.” “For All of Us,” by William Hodge, is sentimental claptrap. “The Dancers,” by Gerald Du Maurier and Viola Tree, is an amusing example of British boob melodrama. By playing the second act first, the New York presentation has been made more effective than the London. “White Desert,” by Maxwell Anderson, is a thoroughly interesting play, finely acted, that has been marred by an undue cutting of the text.

## XI

AND now, with monthly critique No. 181, to pastures new.

# Fifteen Years

By H. L. Mencken

## I

I BEGAN to write these book articles for *THE SMART SET* in November, 1908—that is, the first of them appeared in the magazine for that month. Since then, counting this one, I have composed and printed no less than one hundred and eighty-two—in all, more than nine hundred thousand words of criticism. An appalling dose, certainly! How many books have I reviewed, noticed, praised, mocked, dismissed with lofty sneers? I don't know precisely, but probably fully two thousand. But how many have I *read*? Again I must guess, but I should say at least twice as many. What? Even so. The notion that book reviewers often review books without having read them is chiefly a delusion; it may happen on newspapers, but certainly not on magazines of any pretensions. I remember printing notices of a number of books that were so dull, at least to me, that I couldn't get through them, but in every such case I printed the fact frankly, and so offered no complete judgment. Once, indeed, I read part of a book, wrote and printed a notice denouncing it as drivel, and then, moved by some obscure, inner necessity, returned to it and read it to the end. This experience gave me pause and taught me something. One cylinder of my vanity—the foul passion that is responsible for all book reviewers above the rank of slaves, as it is for all actor-managers, Presidents and archbishops—urged me to stick to my unfavorable notice, but the other cylinder urged me to make handsome amends. I did the latter, and trust that

God will not forget it. I trust, too, that He will not overlook my present voluntary withdrawal from this pulpit. The insurance actuaries say that my expectation of life is exactly twenty-five years; in twenty-five years I might write and print three hundred more articles—another million and a half words. If I now resign the chance and retire to other scenes, then perhaps it may help me a few inches along the Eight-Fold Path. Men have been made saints for less.

## II

AMONG the thousands of letters that have come to me from my customers and the public generally during the fifteen years of my episcopate have been a great many of a uraemic and acerbitous flavor, and not a few of these have set up the doctrine that whoever nominated me for my job was an idiot. To this day, curiously enough, I don't know who he was. At the time the poisoned pen was offered to me I was not in practice as a literary critic, and had not, in fact, done much book reviewing. My actual trade was that of an editorial writer on a provincial newspaper, then in sad decay, and the subjects that I was told off to treat were chiefly (a) foreign politics, a topic then disdained by most American editorial writers, and (b) such manifestations of the naïve and charming communal life of the Republic as are now grouped under the general head of Babbitry. I had a good time in that newspaper job, and invented a large vocabulary of terms of abuse of my countrymen; a



number of these terms have since passed into the American language and are now used even by Babbitts. But I never reviewed books save when the literary critic of the paper was drunk, and that was not often. Some years before I had been the dramatic critic, but that office was already filled by another, to the great relief of the local Frohmans. Those were the palmy days of Augustus Thomas, Clyde Fitch and the dramatized novel. Mansfield was still the emperor of the American stage, Nazimova was a nine-days' wonder, Belasco was almost universally regarded as a Master Mind, and the late Joseph Jefferson still wobbled around the provinces with his tattered scenery and his company of amateurish sons, sons-in-law, cousins and second cousins. I am fond of recalling (to the disquiet of Comrade Nathan, who believed in the Belasco hocus-pocus so late as 1907, and once actually praised Nazimova's Nora in "A Doll's House") that my observations upon these half-forgotten worthies brought many an indignant manager to the business office of my paper, and filled me with a fine sensation of bellicose sagacity. Some time ago I unearthed a bundle of clippings of my old dramatic notices, and their general sapience amazed and enchanted me. It was like meeting a precious one of 1902 and finding her still slim and sweet, with night-black hair and eyes like gasoline pools on wet asphalt. Once, aroused to indignation by my derision of his mumming, Mansfield wrote me a letter denouncing me as an ass and inviting me to dinner. But I was not quite ass enough to accept his invitation. The fashionable way to fetch an anarchistic provincial critic in those days was to hire him as a press-agent; it is, in fact, still done. But I always had a few dollars in my pocket, and so resisted the lure. But by and by I tired of the theatre, and took to writing facetious editorials, many of which were never printed. To this day I dislike the show-house, and never enter it if I can help it.

But to return to my story. The assistant editor of *THE SMART SET*, in 1908, was the late Norman Boyer, with whom, eight years before, I had worked as a police reporter in Baltimore. One day I received a polite note from him, asking me to wait upon him on my next visit to New York. I did so a few weeks later; Boyer introduced me to his chief, Fred Splint, and Splint forthwith offered me the situation of book reviewer to the magazine, with the rank and pay of a sergeant of artillery. Whose notion it was to hire me—whether Boyer's, or Splint's, or some anonymous outsider's—I was not told, and do not know to this day. I had never printed anything in the magazine; I had not, in fact, been doing any magazine work since 1905, when I abandoned the writing of short-stories, as I had abandoned poetry in 1900. But Splint engaged me with a strange and suspicious absence of parley, Boyer gave me an armful of books, the two of us went to Murray's for lunch (I remember a detail: I there heard the waltz, "Ach, Frühling, wie bist du so schön!" for the first time), and in November of the same year my first article appeared in this place. I have not missed an issue since. But now I shuffle off to other scenes.

### III

GLANCING back over the decade and a half, what strikes me most forcibly is the great change and improvement in the situation of the American imaginative author—the novelist, poet, dramatist and writer of short stories. In 1908, strange as it may seem to the literary radicals who roar so safely in Greenwich Village today, the old tradition was still powerful, and the young man or woman who came to New York with a manuscript which violated in any way the pruderies and prejudices of the professors had a very hard time getting it printed. It was a day of complacency and conformity. Hamilton Wright Mabie was still alive and

still taken seriously, and all the young pedagogues who aspired to the critical gown imitated him in his watchful stupidity. This camorra had delivered a violent wallop to Theodore Dreiser eight years before, and he was yet suffering from his bruises; it was not until 1911 that he printed "Jennie Gerhardt." Miss Harriet Monroe and her gang of new poets were still dispersed and inarticulate; Miss Amy Lowell, as yet unaware of Imagism, was writing polite doggerel in the manner of a New England schoolmarm; the reigning dramatists of the nation were Augustus Thomas, David Belasco and Clyde Fitch; Miss Cather was imitating Mrs. Wharton; Hergesheimer had six years to go before he'd come to "The Lay Anthony"; Cabell was known only as one who provided the text for illustrated gift-books; the American novelists most admired by most publishers, by most readers and by all practising critics were Richard Harding Davis, Robert W. Chambers and James Lane Allen. It is hard, indeed, in retrospect, to picture those remote days just as they were. They seem almost fabulous. The chief critical organ of the Republic was actually the Literary Supplement of the *New York Times*. The *Dial* was down with diabetes in Chicago; the *Nation* was made dreadful by the gloomy humors of Paul Elmer More; the *Bookman* was even more saccharine and sophomoric than it is today; the *Freeman*, the *New Republic* and the *Literary Review* were yet unheard of. When the mild and *pianissimo* revolt of the middle 90's—a feeble echo of the English revolt—had spent itself, the Presbyterians marched in and took possession of the works. Most of the erstwhile *revoltés* boldly took the veil—notably Hamlin Garland. The American Idealism now preached so pathetically by Prof. Dr. Sherman and his fellow fugitives from the Christian Endeavor belt was actually on tap. No novel that told the truth about life as Americans were living it, no poem that departed from the old patterns, no play

that had the merest ghost of an idea in it had a chance. When, in 1908, Mrs. Mary Roberts Rinehart printed a conventional mystery story which yet managed to have a trace of sense in it, it caused a sensation. (I reviewed it, by the way, in my first article.) And when, two years later, Dr. William Lyon Phelps printed a book of criticism in which he actually ranked Mark Twain alongside Emerson and Hawthorne, there was as great a stirring beneath the college elms as if a naked fancy woman had run across the campus. If Hergesheimer had come into New York in 1908 with "Cytherea" under his arm, he would have worn out his pantaloons on publishers' benches without getting so much as a polite kick. If Eugene O'Neill had come to Broadway with "The Emperor Jones" or "The Hairy Ape," he would have been sent to Edward E. Rose to learn the elements of his trade. The devilish and advanced thing, in those days, was for a fat lady star to give a couple of matinées of Ibsen's "A Doll's House."

A great many men and a few women addressed themselves to the dispersal of this fog. Some of them were imaginative writers who found it simply impossible to bring themselves within the prevailing rules; some were critics; others were young publishers. As I look back, I can't find any sign of concerted effort; it was, in the main, a case of each on his own. The more contumacious of the younger critics, true enough, tended to rally 'round Huneker, who, as a matter of fact, was very little interested in American letters, and the young novelists had a leader in Dreiser, who, I suspect, was quite unaware of most of them. However, it was probably Dreiser who chiefly gave form to the movement, despite the fact that for eleven long years he was silent. Not only was there a useful rallying-point in the idiotic suppression of "Sister Carrie"; there was also the encouraging fact of the man's massive immovability. Physically and mentally he loomed up like a sort of headland—

a great crag of basalt that no conceivable assault seemed able to touch. His predecessor, Frank Norris, was of much softer stuff. Norris, had he lived longer, would have been wooed and ruined, I fear, by the Mabies, Boyntons and other such Christian critics, as Garland had been wooed and ruined before him. Dreiser, fortunately for American letters, never had to face any such seduction. The critical schoolmarms, young and old, fell upon him with violence the moment he appeared above the horizon of his native steppe, and soon he was the storm center of a battle-royal that lasted nearly twenty years. The man himself was solid, granitic, without nerves. Very little cunning was in him and not much bellicose enterprise, but he showed a truly appalling tenacity. The pedagogues tried to scare him to death, they tried to stampede his partisans, and they tried to put him into Coventry and get him forgotten, but they failed every time. The more he was reviled, sneered at, neglected, the more resolutely he stuck to his formula. That formula is now every serious American novelist's formula. They all try to write better than Dreiser, and not a few of them succeed, but they all follow him in his fundamental purpose—to make the novel true. Dreiser added something, and here following is harder; he tried to make the novel poignant—to add sympathy, feeling, imagination to understanding. It will be a long while before that aim is better achieved than he achieved it in "Jennie Gerhardt."

## IV

TODAY, it seems to me, the American imaginative writer, whether he be novelist, poet or dramatist, is quite as free as he deserves to be. He is free to depict the life about him precisely as he sees it, and to interpret it in any manner he pleases. The publishers of the land, once so fearful of novelty, are now so hospitable to it that they constantly fail to distinguish the novelty that has hard thought behind it from

that which has only some Village mountebank's desire to stagger the *booboisie*. Our stage is perhaps the freest in the world—not only to sensations, but also to ideas. Our poets get into print regularly with stuff so bizarre and unearthly that only Christian Scientists can understand it. The extent of this new freedom, indeed, is so great that large numbers of persons appear to be unable to believe in it; they are constantly getting into sweats about the few taboos and inhibitions that remain, for example, those nourished by comstockery. But the importance and puissance of comstockery, I believe, is quite as much overestimated as the importance and puissance of the objurgations still hurled at sense and honesty by the provincial prophets of American Idealism, the Genius of America, and other such phantasms. The Comstocks, true enough, still raid an occasional book, particularly when their funds are running low and there is need to inflame Christian men, but that their monkey-shines ever actually *suppress* a book of any consequence I very much doubt. The flood is too vast for them. Chasing a minnow with desperate passion, they let a whole school of whales go by. In any case, they confine their operations to the single field of sex, and it must be plain that it is not in the field of sex that the hottest battles against the old American tradition have been fought and won. "Three Soldiers" was far more subversive of that tradition than all the stories of sex ever written in America—and yet "Three Soldiers" came out with the imprint of one of the most respectable of American publishers, and was scarcely challenged. "Babbitt" scored a victory that was still easier, and yet more significant, for its target was the double one of American business and American Christianity; it set the whole world to laughing at two things that are far more venerated in the United States than the bodily chastity of women. Nevertheless, "Babbitt" went down so easily that even the alfalfa *Gelehrten* joined in whooping for it, apparently on the

theory that praising Lewis would make the young of the national species forget Dreiser. Victimized by their own craft, the *Gelehrten* thus made a foul attack upon their own principles, for if their principles did not stand against just such anarchistic books, then they were without any sense whatever, as was and is, indeed, the case.

I shall not rehearse the steps in the advance from "Sister Carrie," suppressed and proscribed, to "Babbitt," swallowed and hailed. The important thing is that almost complete freedom now prevails for the serious artist—that publishers stand ready to print him, that critics exist who are competent to recognize him and willing to do battle for him, and that there is a large public eager to read him. What use is he making of his opportunity? Certainly not the worst use possible, but also certainly not the best. He is free, but he is not yet, perhaps, worthy of freedom. He lets the popular magazine, the movie and the cheap-John publisher pull him too hard in one direction; he lets the vagaries of his politics pull him too hard in another. In my first article in this place I predicted the destruction of Upton Sinclair the artist by Upton Sinclair the visionary and reformer. Sinclair's bones now bleach upon the beach. Beside them repose those of many another man and woman of great promise—for example, Winston Churchill. Floyd Dell is on his way—one novel and two doses of Greenwich Village psychology. Hergesheimer writes novelles for the *Saturday Evening Post*. Willa Cather has won the Pulitzer Prize—a transaction comparable to the election of Charles W. Eliot to the Elks. Masters turns to prose fiction that somehow fails to come off. Dreiser, forgetting his trilogy, experiments rather futilely with the drama, the essay, free verse. Fuller renounces the novel for book reviewing. Tarkington is another Pulitzer prizeman, always on the verge of first-rate work but always falling short by an inch. Many of the White Hopes of ten or fifteen years ago per-

ished in the war, as surely victims of its slaughter as Rupert Brooke or Otto Braun; it is, indeed, curious to note that practically every American author who moaned and sobbed for democracy between the years 1914 and 1919 is now extinct. The rest have gone down the chute of the movies.

But all this, after all, may signify little. The shock troops have been piled up in great masses, but the ground is cleared for those that follow. Well, then, what of the youngsters? Do they show any sign of seizing their chance. The answer is yes and no. On the one hand there is a group which, revolving 'round the *Bookman*, talks a great deal and accomplishes nothing. On the other hand there is a group which, revolving 'round the *Dial*, *Broom* and the *Little Review*, talks even more and does even less. But on the third hand, as it were, there is a group which says little and saws wood. I have, from time to time, pointed out some of its members in this place. There seems to be nothing in concert between them, no sign of a formal movement, with its *blague* and its bombast, but all of them have this in common: that they owe both their opportunity and their method to the revolution that followed "Sister Carrie." Most of them are from the Middle West, but they are distinct from the Chicago crowd, now degenerated to posturing and worse. They are sophisticated, disillusioned, free from cant, and yet they have imagination. The raucous protests of the evangelists of American Idealism seem to have no more effect upon them than the advances of the Expressionists, Dadaists and other such café-table prophets. Out of this dispersed and ill-defined group, I believe, something will come. Its members are those who are free from the two great delusions which, from the beginning, have always cursed American letters: the delusion that a work of art is primarily a moral document, that its purpose is to make men better Christians and more docile cannon-fodder, and the delusion that



it is an exercise in logic, that its purpose is to prove something. These delusions, lingering beyond their time, are responsible for most of the disasters visible in the national literature today—the disasters of the radicals as well as those of the 100 per cent dunderheads. The writers of the future, I hope and believe, will carefully avoid both of them.

## V

INASMUCH as I was immersed from the start in the struggle that I have briefly described, it is but natural that my critical treatises should have seemed, to many worthy souls, unduly tart, and even, in some cases, extravagantly abusive and unjust. But as I re-examine them in these closing days of my pastorate, I can't escape the feeling that that view of them is itself somewhat bilious. Tart, yes. But unjust—well, certainly not often. If I regret anything, it is that I have been, more than once, unduly tolerant. The spectacle of a man hard and earnestly at work is one that somehow moves me; I am often blinded to the falseness of his purpose by the agony of his striving. It is a sentimentality that quickly damages critical honesty, and I have succumbed to it more than once. I have overpraised books, and I have applauded authors incautiously and too soon. But, as the Lord God Jahveh is my judge and I hope in all humility to be summoned to sit upon His right hand upon the dreadful and inevitable Day of Judgment, when all hearts are bared and virtue gets its long-delayed reward, I most solemnly make my oath that, with the single exception noted on a previous page, I can't remember a time when I ever printed a slating that was excessive or unjust. The quacks and dolts who have been mauled in these pages all deserved it; more, they all deserved far worse than they got. If I lost them customers by my performances I am glad of it. If I annoyed and humiliated them I am glad of it again. If I shamed any of them into

abandoning their quackery—but here I begin to pass beyond the borders of probability, and become a quack myself.

Regarding false art, cheap cant, pious skullduggery, dishonest pretense—regarding all these things my position is this: that their practitioners have absolutely no rights that anyone is bound to respect. To be polite to them is not to be tolerant; it is simply to be silly. If a critic has any duty at all, save the primary duty to be true to himself, it is the public duty of protecting the fine arts against the invasion of such frauds. They are insidious in their approach; they know how to cajole and deceive; unchallenged, they are apt to bag many victims. Once they are permitted to get a foothold, however insecure, it becomes doubly hard to combat them. My method, therefore, has been to tackle them at first sight and with an axe. It has led to some boisterous engagements, and, I sincerely hope, to a few useful unmaskings. So engaged, I do not hesitate to admit that I have been led by my private tastes quite as much as by any sense of professional duty. The man who tries to subjugate beautiful letters to the puerile uses of some bucolic moral scheme, or some nonsensical notion of the national destiny, or some petty variety of new-fangled politics is a man who is congenitally and incurably offensive to me. He has his right, true enough, to be heard, but that right is not properly exercised in the field of *belles lettres*.

## VI

A HUNDRED times, during these fifteen years, I have been made aware painfully of a great gap in our domestic *apparatus criticus*, and I still wonder that no competent clerk of letters has ever thought to fill it. I allude to the lack of a comprehensive and intelligent history of American literature. Why does it remain unwritten? The existing books are all either conventional texts for the instruction of schoolboys, or histories of single periods, *e.g.*, Tyler's excellent work on the Colonial literature

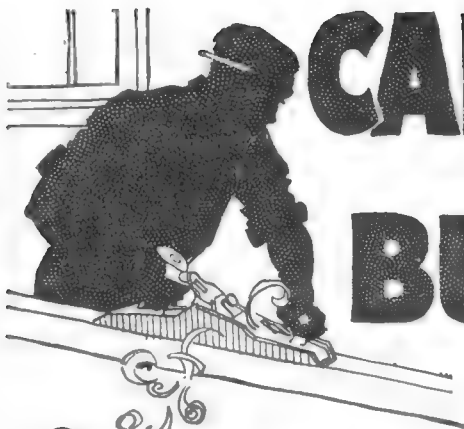
and Pattee's unimaginative but nevertheless often shrewd monograph on the period from 1870 to 1900. The Cambridge History of American Literature by no means meets the need. It is, in detail, accurate enough, and it shows some original exploration of the sources, but its defect is that it does not indicate the direction of the main currents, nor the non-literary forces behind them—that it is too much a series of essays on salient men, and views them only too often as phenomena in vacuo. Whole sections of the field are not entered at all—and often they are extremely interesting sections. Many of them are along the borders, with religion, politics or race enmity just over the fence. So far as I know, no literary historian, writing about Poe, has ever thrown up the fact that he came to manhood just as Andrew Jackson mounted the tin throne at Washington. Yet it seems to me to be a fact of capital importance; it explains many things about Poe that are otherwise inexplicable.

Poe, indeed, is a colossus who has never had a competent historian. His biographers have spent themselves upon vain efforts to find out the truth about his periodical drunkenness and his banal love affairs; meanwhile, the question of his artistic origins, like the question of his influence, is passed over with a few platitudes. The current doctrine in the high-schools seems to be that he was a superb poet and the inventor of the short story, or, at all events, of the tale of mystery and horror. He was actually neither. Nine-tenths of his poetry is so artificial that it is difficult to imagine even college tutors reading it voluntarily; as for his tales, they have long since passed over to the shelf of juveniles. But Poe was nevertheless a man with a first-rate head on him, and it seems to me that he proved it abundantly in his criticism, which the pedagogues now neglect. This criticism was not only revolutionary in its own time; it would have continued to seem revolutionary, had it been read,

down to a few years ago. Who could imagine anything more subversive of the professorial categories—more direct, clear and hard-hitting, more fatal to literary cheese-mongers, more disconcerting to every hollow pretense and quackery. How did Poe come to write it? What set him on the track? And by what process was the whole body of it so neatly buried the moment he gasped out his last breath?

The equally strange case of Emerson I have discussed more than once in the past, but an adequate treatise upon him, alive and dead, yet remains to be written. It was obviously Emerson's central aim in life to liberate the American mind—to set it free from the crippling ethical obsessions of Puritanism, to break down herd thinking, to make liberty more real on the intellectual plane than it could ever be on the political plane. It is his tragic fate to be mouthed and admired today chiefly by persons who have entirely misunderstood his position—in brief, by the heirs and assigns of the very prigs and dullards he spent his whole life opposing. Certainly it would be difficult to imagine a greater irony than this. Emerson paved the way for every intellectual revolt that has occurred since his time, and yet he has always been brought into court, not as a witness for the rebels, but as a witness for the militia and the police. Three-fourths of the books and monographs written about him depict him as a sort of primeval Dr. Frank Crane; he was actually the first important American to give a hand to Whitman. . . . And Whitman himself! Who will work up the material so laboriously and competently unearthed by Prof. Holloway? . . . Who, indeed, will write the first history of American literature that fits such men as Poe, Emerson and Whitman into their true places, and reveals the forces that shaped them, and describes accurately the heritage that they left to their countrymen? . . . I ask the question and pass on.

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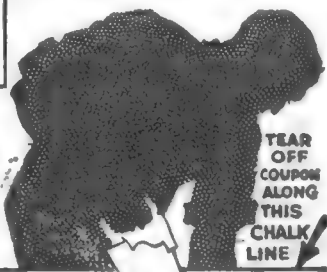
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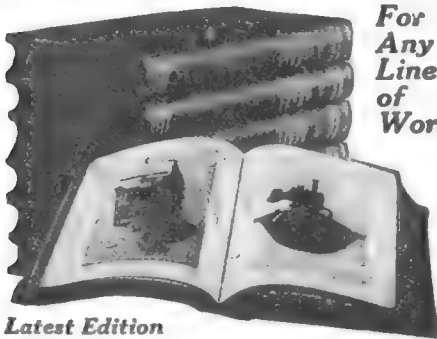
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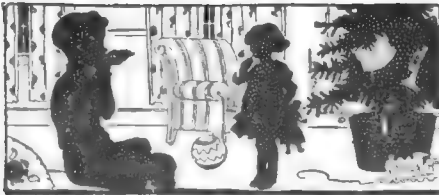
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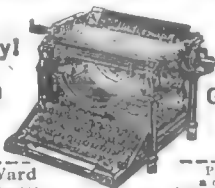
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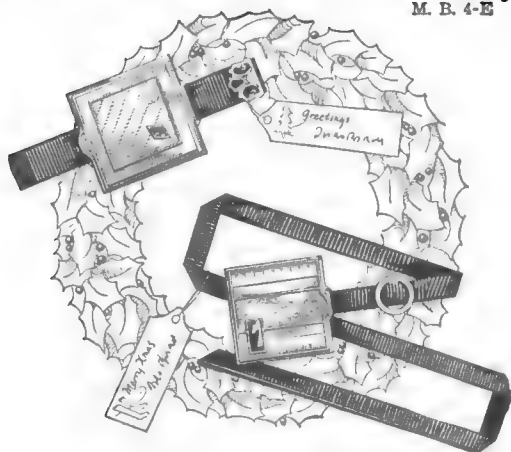
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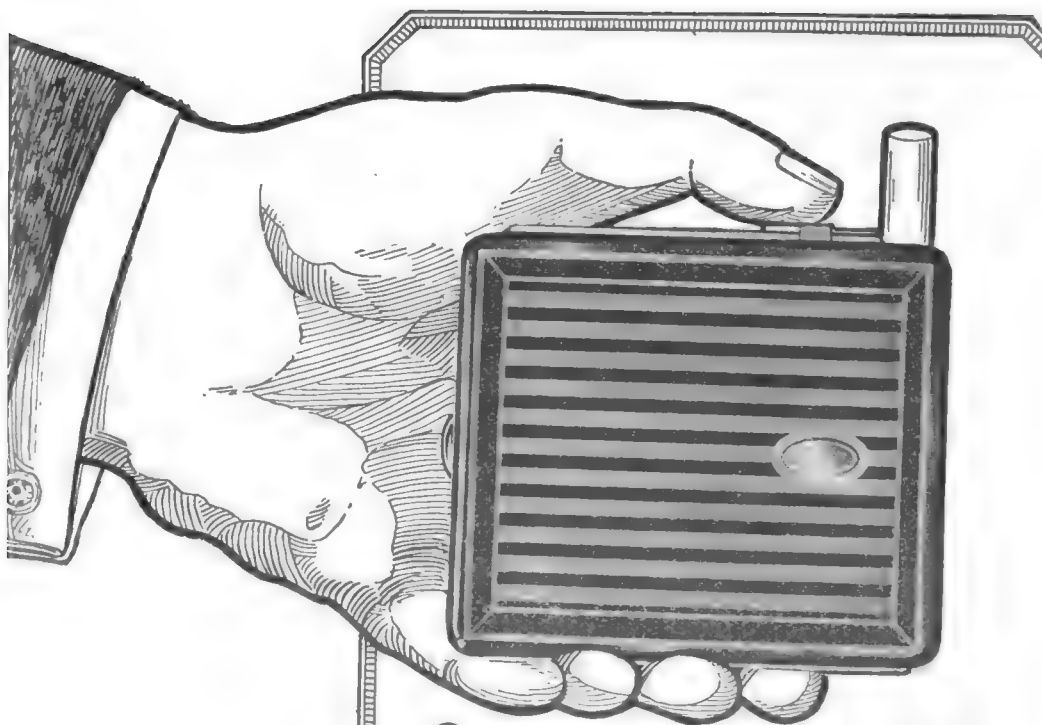
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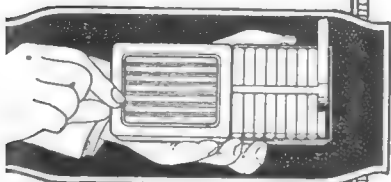


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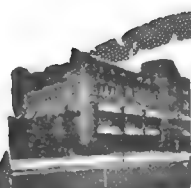
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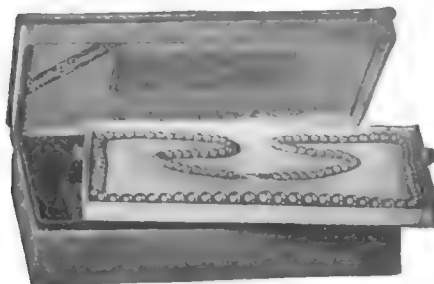
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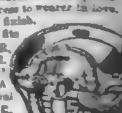
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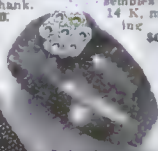
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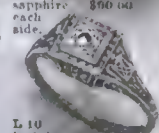
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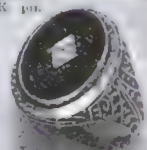
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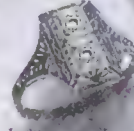
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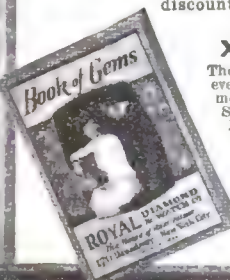
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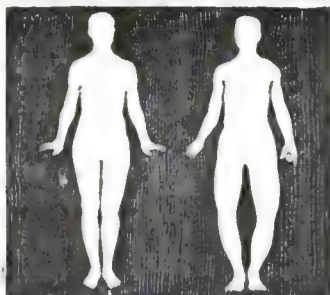


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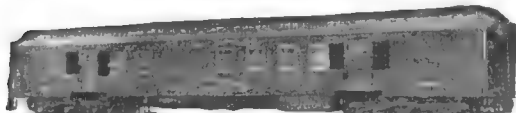
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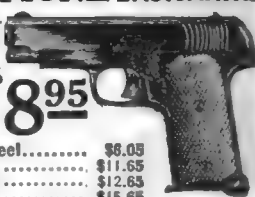
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LOWEST PRICES  
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35 or 32.20 Cal. **\$17.25**  
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Your Skin can be Quickly Cleared of Pimples, Blackheads, Acne Eruptions on the face or body, Barbers Itch, Eczema, Enlarged Pores, Oily or Shiny Skin.

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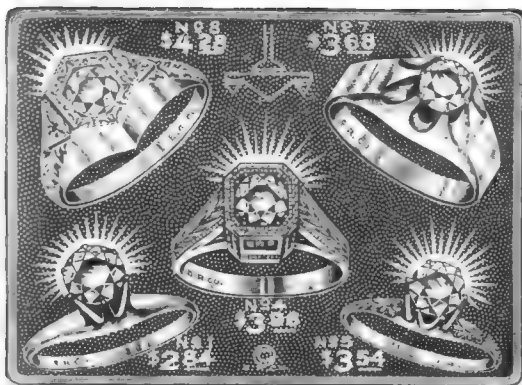
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Carat size gems. Beautiful mountings of most modern design. Choice of gold or latest white platinum finish. Unqualified 20-year guarantee. Hand-made set leather case free with each ring.

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**T**HE BOSS gives the orders—Riley takes them and does what he is told. Both started the same, had equal ability to begin with. Riley works harder than the BOSS and gets less money. What is the answer?

Training did it. Your brain is an engine that needs fuel. Study and training supply the fuel that makes it go. And when you mix brains with your work you **SIMPLY CANNOT HELP BUT GET AHEAD.**

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| .. Accountant & Auditor             | .. Surveyor (& Mapping)  |
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Pyorrhea destroys more teeth than all other causes, combined. If your gums bleed when you brush your teeth, if they are spongy and sore and pulling away from the teeth, beware of Pyorrhea. Thousands of benefited sufferers claim their soft, discolored, bleeding, foul-smelling and spongy gums, loosened and sensitive teeth, have been quickly made firm, strong and healthy by the use of AMOSOL. Results false amazing.

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**Scientist Produces an Invigorator  
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Have you lost your youth, vigor and "pep"? Does life seem dull and work a grind? Don't worry. Science has produced a new formula said to be superior even to the much discussed gland treatments. Many men and women are now quickly and easily regaining lost vim, vigor and vitality in the privacy of their homes.

The principal ingredient is an extract from the bark of an African tree. It is said to be a most remarkable invigorator. Combined with it are other efficient tonic and vitalizing elements of proved merit. In many cases the compound produces marked improvement in 24 hours. In a short time the vitality is usually raised, the circulation improved and the glow of health is felt in every part.

The laboratories producing this new vitalizer, which is called Re-Bld-Tab's, are so confident of its power that they offer new customers a large \$2 supply for only \$1 and guarantee to refund the money if the remedy fails to give results in one week.

Any reader of this paper may test the treatment without risk. Send no money, but just your name and address, to the Re-Bld Laboratories, 473 Gateway Station, Kansas City, Mo., and a full \$2 treatment of Re-Bld-Tab's will be mailed. On delivery, pay the postman only \$1 and postage. If not delighted with the results, notify the laboratories and your money will be refunded in full. Do not hesitate about accepting this offer, as it is fully guaranteed.

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**Instant Relief; Many Cures  
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Just because you have been ruptured for years and have tried all kinds of bungling trusses and appliances, salves, liniments and plasters without satisfactory results, do not think you have to stay in this dangerous condition.

You may have instant blessed relief and, as scores of others report, complete recovery by the use of this simple, inexpensive discovery.

Send no money. To prove that my famous Sponge Rubber Rupture Pad does conquer Rupture, even in its worst forms, I will send a sample absolutely free to any ruptured person, in a plain sealed package. Possibly you are wondering whether this can be true. Stop it! The test is free and surely the test will tell. Cut out this notice and hand it to a ruptured friend or send it with your name and address to E. H. Scott, Hernia Expert, 607-W Scott Bldg., Akron, Ohio, and you will quickly receive a sample Sponge Rubber Pad with full directions. No obligation to purchase. Don't let Rupture handicap you in the battle of life, but make this test today.

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**ONLY \$1.00 DOWN** New special 25 year gold cases. New 17 Jewel Boulevard Models. New gold metal dials—real works of art.

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**SENT ON APPROVAL.** We send you this new 17 Jewel Elgin on approval and after you are fully satisfied, you pay only a little each month, so little that you will never miss the money.

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**Write Today** for catalog and full particulars of this special introductory offer. We are the world's largest Elgin Watch House; we have trusted wage-earners for nearly a quarter of a century, and will trust you.

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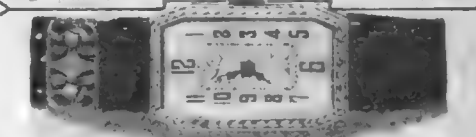
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Beautiful full-size **BAR PIN**, set with Luxite Diamonds, platinum finish, free with ring.

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Use **PISO'S**—this prescription quickly relieves children and adults. A pleasant syrup. No opiates.

35¢ and 60¢ sizes sold everywhere.

## 60% of Market Price

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This 3/4-1/16 Ct. perfectly cut diamond, a money, blazing solitaire, at \$42.65 among bargains in our lists. See the many big amazing values some as low as \$60 per Carat, other higher per Carat bargains. This 75 year old largest Diamond Bargain Firm in all the world lends money on diamonds. Thousands of unpaid loans and other bargains. Must sell NOW.

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Just what every woman has been waiting for at a price everyone can afford.

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There are now approximately 25,000 practitioners, more than a hundred schools and about 15,000 students.

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## DEFINITION

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**22¢**  
**a piece**

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Hand engraved solitaire ring 14K gold \$., guaranteed!

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**Free**

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35¢ and 60¢ sizes sold everywhere

## 60% of Market Price

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## DEFINITION

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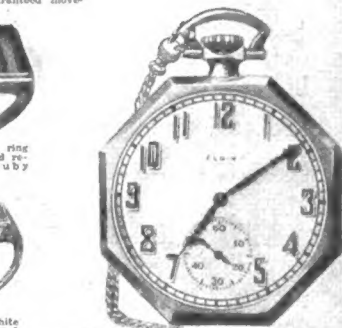
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